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IDEALS IN IRELAND

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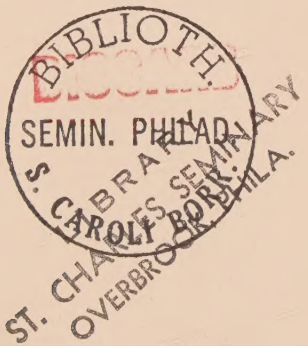
IDEALS IN IRELAND

EDITED BY LADY GREGORY
WRITTEN BY "A. E.," D. P. MORAN, GEORGE MOORE, DOUGLAS HYDE, STANDISH O'GRADY, AND W. B. YEATS



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I know I am restless and make others so;
I know my words are weapons, full of danger, full of death;
(Indeed I am myself the real soldier;
It is not he, there, with his bayonet, and not the red-striped artillery man;)
For I confront peace, security, and all the settled laws, to unsettle them;
I am more resolute because all have denied me than I would ever have been had all accepted me;
I heed not, I have never heeded, either experience, caution, majorities, nor ridicule;
And the threat of what is called hell is little or nothing to me,
And the lure of what is called heaven is little or nothing to me.
—Dear camerado! I confess I have urged you onward with me, and still urge you, without the least idea what is our destination,
Or whether we shall be victorious, or utterly quelled and defeated.

WALT WHITMAN.

Russia can do without every one of us, but not one of us can do without her—Woe to him who thinks he can, and woe twofold to him who actually does without her! The cosmopolitan is a nonentity—worse than a nonentity; without nationality is no art, nor truth nor life, nor anything. You cannot even have an ideal face without individual expression; only a vulgar face can be without it.

TURGUÉNIEFF.

Ní ṁaċaiḋ mire go bṗáṫ aṗ gcúl,
Má'ṗ éigin ḃeiṫ uṁal ḋuit, iṗ móṗ mo ṫeun,
Muna ḋtig liom ṗiuḃal, muna ḋtig liom ṗiuḃal,
Muna ḋtig liom ṗiuḃal aṗ mo ṗáiṗc-ṗe féin.

AN CRAOIBHIN AOIBHIN.

EDITOR'S NOTE

My wittiest friend says that all communities resolve themselves into three individuals,—the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker. Looking about me, I am aware of the truth of his epigram.

The baker, a useful and necessary tradesman, sets his life by the hands of the clock and has all the peaceful virtues of the good citizen. He accepts the established order of things, feeds the oven through the week, and rings the muffin bell on Sunday. He was born to his religion, his politics, and his newspaper, and would feel himself astray in the world should he change one or other of them. He lives in a half light, and goes to bed at sunrise. He feels convinced that opinions, like loaves, should be kept to a certain standard; he knows that yeast is unwholesome until it has ceased working. His white jacket is cut to a ready-made pattern, and he buys an Encyclopedia to propitiate some Unknown God.

As to the butcher, he is a more picturesque figure than the baker. There is a hearty ring in his loud platitudes, and his belief in himself and in the stroke of his knife, being sincere, gives him an air of sincerity. But his trade is in dead meat, it is to that his scales are adjusted, and the stirrings of life disturb his calculations; his business and his duty call to him to destroy life wherever it appears. He has more shapes than one, and he sets up his booth in many markets. We recognise the gleam of his knife behind the crozier of a prelate making prayers for the success of the shot and shell aimed at his fellow-Christians; we recognise the hem of his blue apron under the frock-coat of a Commissioner of Education engaged in cutting through the veins that unite the present with the past; we recognise that apron when waved as a flag from the Chinese Wall that separates Trinity College from Ireland.

The butcher and the baker have their daily newspapers, where all who desire may see their views and the views they attribute to each other. But the candlestick maker is not so well served, nor does he find such ready apprentices. The idealist, the seer, he cannot go with the crowd. He may still say, as an old maker of candlesticks said long ago, "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird: all the birds of the forest are against it." Yet he holds up the light and hands it on from generation to generation, taking it from under the bushel that it may search the dark corners of the house. "I know I am restless and make others so!" The drowsy many hear his cry and close their ears and eyes; they have eaten and drunk, and they want to sleep undisturbed by the hammering of metal or the flash of sudden flame.

. . . . . .

Of the candlestick makers who have given me leave to set out some of their wares, Mr. Moran has his own workshop, where his design, to use his own words, is taking the shape of "a sword, or a flail, or a sledge-hammer." Mr. Yeats has caught and imprisoned the will o' the wisp fire, miscalled evanescent, that is one of the eternal and enduring things of nature. A. E. (Mr. George Russell) put his mystic light some time ago into a turnip lantern, to the great advantage of the turnip, and it shines from there more clearly than ever before. Mr. Moore has placed his penitential taper on something that suggests a blackthorn. Mr. O'Grady holds up his torch in the dusky chamber where the gentry of Ireland have lain through their hundred years' sleep. Douglas Hyde, our *Craobhin Aoibhin*, stooped down to make an earthenware candlestick, but when he lifted his head he knew it was not a candle he had lighted, but a star he had

discovered, and it is now lighting up all the western sky.

. . . . . .

Two years ago some articles that had been published in the *Daily Express* were republished by its editor under the title, *Literary Ideals in Ireland.* The following articles, written since then, are from the *New Ireland Review*, the *All Ireland Review*, the *North American Review*, the *Claidheam Soluis*, and the *Leader.* My object in collecting them is to show to those who look beyond politics and horses, in what direction thought is moving in Ireland. The choice of articles is mine, and the writers are only responsible for their own opinions.

. . . . . .

The candlestick, or rushlight holder, which is represented on the cover was given to me by the granddaughter of a blacksmith, who had made it in 1798. She said he had made at that time many pikes for the rebels, but whenever the king's men were seen coming near the village, the pikes were hidden away, and he was found hammering at this candlestick; "and that is the reason there are so many twists in it."

COOLE PARK, GORT, *December* 1900.

NATIONALITY AND IMPERIALISM

By A. E.

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THE idea of the national being emerged at no recognisable point in our history. It is older than any name we know. It is not earth born, but the synthesis of many heroic and beautiful moments, and these, it must be remembered, are divine in their origin. Every heroic deed is an act of the spirit, and every perception of beauty is vision with the divine eye, and not with the mortal sense. The spirit was subtly intermingled with the shining of old romance, and it was no mere phantasy which shows Ireland at its dawn in a misty light thronged with divine figures, and beneath and nearer to us, demigods and heroes fading into recognisable men. The bards took cognisance only of the most notable personalities who preceded them; and of these only the acts which had a symbolic or spiritual significance; and these grew thrice refined as generations of poets in enraptured musings along by the mountains or in the woods, brooded upon their heritage of story until, as it passed from age to age, the accumulated beauty grew greater than the beauty of the hour, the dream began to enter into the children of our race, and their thoughts turned from earth to that world in which it had its inception.

It was a common belief among the ancient peoples that each had a national genius or deity who presided over them, in whose all-embracing mind they were enclosed, and by whom their destinies were shaped. We can conceive of the national spirit in Ireland as first manifesting itself through individual heroes or kings; and, as the history of famous warriors laid hold upon the people, extending its influence through the sentiment engendered in the popular mind until it created therein the germs of a kindred nature.

An aristocracy of lordly and chivalrous heroes is bound in time to create a great democracy by the reflection of their character in the mass, and the idea

of the divine right of kings is succeeded by the idea of the divine right of the people. If this sequence cannot be traced in any one respect with historical regularity, it is because of the complexity of national life, its varied needs, and its infinite changes of sentiment; but the threads are all taken up in the end, and ideas which were forgotten and absent from the voices of men will be found, when recurred to, to have grown to a rarer and more spiritual beauty in their quiet abode in the heart. The seeds which are sown at the beginning of a race bear their flowers and fruits towards its close; and those antique names which already begin to stir us with their power, Angus, Lu, Deirdre, Finn, Ossian, and the rest, will be found to be each one the symbol of enduring qualities, and their story a trumpet through which will be blown the music of an eternal joy, the sentiment of an inexorable justice, the melting power of beauty in sorrow, the wisdom of age, and the longings of the spirit.

The question arises how this race inheritance can best be preserved and developed. To some it is of no value, but these are voices of dust. To some the natural outcome is coalition with another power, and a frank and full acceptance of the imperial ideal. To some the solution lies in a self-centred national life. I will not touch here upon the material advantages of one or other course, which can best be left to economists to discuss. The literary man, who is, or ought to be, concerned mainly with intellectual interests, should only intervene in politics when principles affecting the spiritual life of his country are involved. To me the imperial ideal seems to threaten the destruction of that national being which has been growing through centuries, and I ask myself, What can it profit my race if it gain the empire of the world and yet lose its own soul—a soul which is only now growing to self-consciousness, and this to be lost simply

that we may help to build up a sordid trade federation between England and her Colonies? Was our divine origin for this end? Did the bards drop in song the seed of heroic virtues, and beget the mystic chivalry of the past, and flood our being with spiritual longings, that we might at last sink to clay and seek only to inherit the earth? The mere area of the empire bewitches the commonplace mind, and turns it from its own land; yet the State of Athens was not so large as the Province of Munster, and, though dead, the memory of it is brighter than the living light of any people on earth to-day. Some, to whom I would be the last to deny nobility of thought and sincere conviction, would lead us from ourselves through the belief that the moral purification of the empire could be accomplished by us. I wish I could believe it. I am afraid our own political and social ethics demand all the attention we can give. There is a reservoir of spiritual life in the land, but it is hardly strong enough to repel English materialism, while we are nominally hostile to English ideas; and shall it be triumphant when we have given over our hopes of a separate national existence, and merged our dreams and longings with a nation which has become a byword for materialism? Under no rule are people so free,—we are told. A little physical freedom more or less matters nothing. Men are as happy and as upright as we, in countries where a passport is necessary to travel from one town to another. No form of government we know is perfect, and none will be permanent. The federation of the world and its typical humanity, exists in germ in the spiritual and intellectual outcasts of our time, who can find no place in the present social order. A nation is sacred as it holds few or many of those to whom spiritual ideals are alone worth having; the mode of life, prosperous or unfortunate, which brings them to birth and enables them to live is the

best of any; and the genius of our country has acted wisely in refusing any alliance offering only material prosperity and power. Every race must work out its own destiny. England and the Colonies will, as is fit and right, work out theirs without our moral guidance. They would resent it if offered, just as we resent it from them. It may be affirmed that the English form of government is, on the whole, a good one, but it does not matter. It may be good for Englishmen, but it is not the expression of our national life and ideas. I express my ideals in literature; you, perhaps, in social reform. Both may be good; yours, indeed, may be best, but I would feel it a bitter injustice if I was compelled to order my life in accordance with your aims. I would do poorly what you shine in. We ask the liberty of shaping the social order in Ireland to reflect our own ideals, and to embody that national soul which has been slowly incarnating in our race from its cloudy dawn. The twentieth century may carry us far from Finn and Oscar and the stately chieftains and heroes of their time, far even from the ideals of Tone, Mitchell, and Davis, but I hope it will not carry us into contented acceptance of the deadness, the dulness, the commonplace of English national sentiment, or what idealism remains in us, bequeathed from the past, range itself willingly under a banner which is regarded chiefly as a commercial asset by the most famous exponent of the imperial idea.

I feel that the idea expressed by several writers lately, that with many people in Ireland patriotism and nationality are only other names for race hatred, must be combated. It may be so with a few, but the charge has been levelled not at isolated individuals here and there, but at a much larger class who seriously think about their country.

We are told our attitude towards England and

English things is a departure from the divine law of love. Let us look into the circumstances: a number of our rapidly dwindling race have their backs to a wall, they are making an appeal for freedom, for the right to choose their own ideals, to make their own laws, to govern their own lives according to the God-implanted law within them; seeing everywhere, too, the wreck of their hopes, the supremacy of an alien will, —to such people, striving desperately for a principle which is sacred and eternal, these moral platitudes are addressed. Is not freedom as necessary as love to my human soul or to any people? Can there be any real brotherhood without it? If we are debarred from the freedom we would have, how narrow is the range for human effort! We in Ireland would keep in mind our language, teach our children our history, the story of our heroes, and the long traditions of our race which stretch back to God. But we are everywhere thwarted. A blockhead of a professor drawn from the intellectual obscurity of Trinity, and appointed as commissioner to train the national mind according to British ideas, meets us with an ultimatum: "I will always discourage the speaking of Gaelic wherever I can." We feel poignantly it is not merely Gaelic which is being suppressed, but the spiritual life of our race. A few ignoramuses have it in their power, and are trying their utmost, to obliterate the mark of God upon a nation. It is not from Shelley or Keats our peasantry derive their mental nourishment, now that they are being cut off from their own past. We see everywhere a moral leprosy, a vulgarity of mind creeping over them. The Police Gazettes, the penny novels, the hideous comic journals, replace the once familiar poems and the beautiful and moving memoirs of classic Ireland. The music that breathed Tir-nan-og and overcame men's hearts with all gentle and soft emotions is heard more faintly, and the songs of the London

music halls may be heard in places where the music of fairy enchanted the elder generations. The shout of the cockney tourist sounds in the cyclopean crypts and mounds once sanctified by druid mysteries, and divine visitations, and passings from the mortal to the immortal. Ireland Limited is being run by English syndicates. It is the descent of a nation into hell, not nobly, not as a sacrifice made for a great end, but ignobly and without hope of resurrection. If we who watch protest bitterly at the racial degradation—for we have none of us attained all the moral perfections —we are assured that we are departing from the law of love. We can have such a noble destiny if we will only accept it. When we have lost everything we hoped for, lost our souls even, we can proceed to spiritualise the English, and improve the moral tone of the empire. Some, even those who are Celts, protest against our movements as forlorn hopes. Yet what does it matter whether every Celt perished in the land, so that our wills, inviolate to the last, make obeisance only to the light which God has set for guidance in our souls? Would not that be spiritual victory and the greatest success? What would be the success we are assured of if we lay aside our hopes? What could we have or what could we give to humanity if our mental integrity is broken? God gives no second gift to a nation if it flings aside its birthright. We cannot put on the ideals of another people as a garment. We cannot, with every higher instinct of our nature shocked and violated, express ourselves as lovers of the law that rules us. We would be slaves if we did. The incarnate love came not with peace but a sword. It does not speak only with the Holy Breath, but has in its armoury death and the strong weapons of the other immortals. It is better to remain unbroken to the last, and I count it as noble to fight God's battles as to keep His peace.

I confess I do not love England. Love is a spirit which will not, with me at least, come at all. It bestows itself, and will not be commanded, having laws and an end of its own. But for that myriad humanity which throngs the cities of England I feel a profound pity; for it seems to me that in factory, in mine, in warehouse, the life they have chosen to live in the past, the lives those born into that country must almost inevitably lead now, is farther off from beauty, more remote from spirit, more alien from deity, than that led by any people hitherto in the memory of the world. I have no hatred for them. I do not think any of my countrymen have, however they may phrase the feeling in their hearts. I think it is a spiritual antagonism they feel which they translate into terms of the more limited conscious mind. I think their struggle is in reality not against flesh and blood, but is a portion of the everlasting battle against principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness in high places, which underlies every other battle which has been or will be fought by men. I do not say that everything English is stupid, invariably and inevitably wrong. But I do say that every act by which England would make our people other than they would be themselves, is stupid, invariably and inevitably wrong. Not invariably wrong, perhaps, when judged from the external point of view, but invariably wrong when judged from the interior spiritual standpoint. How terrible a thing it is to hinder the soul in its freedom, let the wild upheavals and the madness of protest bear witness.

Though we are old, ethnologically considered, yet as a nation, a collective unit, we are young or yet unborn. If the stupefying influence of foreign control were removed, if we had charge of our own national affairs, it would mean the starting up into sudden life of a thousand dormant energies, spiritual,

intellectual, artistic, social, economic, and human. The national spirit, like a beautiful woman, cannot or will not reveal itself wholly while a coarse presence is near, an unwelcome stranger in possession of the home. It is shy, hiding itself away in remote valleys, or in haunted mountains, or deep in the quiet of hearts that do not reveal themselves. Only to its own will it come and sing its hopes and dreams; not selfishly for itself alone, but sharing in the universal human hopes, and desirous of solving some of the eternal problems. Being still so young as a nation, and before the true starting of our career, we might say of ourselves as the great American poet of his race, with which so many of our own have mingled—

"Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied, over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden, and the lesson.
Pioneers! Oh, pioneers!"

THE BATTLE OF TWO CIVILIZATIONS

D. P. Moran

I AND many others have convinced ourselves, that Ireland during this century has in many vital matters played the fool. If this view in any way soothes the conscience of the English for their own country's cruel injustices to Ireland I cannot help it. Let the truth be stated though the sky should fall. We are sick of "Irish national" make-believes and frauds, sick of shouting nation when there is no nation; and the much-abused national consciousness of the Irish people cries for truth and light, and death to shams and impostures.

The cry of the friendly Englishman, fully responded to by the "reasonable" Irishman, is, "Let us know more about Irishmen, and let Irishmen know more about us; we will learn to like and understand one another." As against this view it is absolutely clear to me, though the expression may appear to have some of the form of a "bull," that when two nations understand one another there is from that moment only one nation in it. International misunderstanding is one of the marks of nationhood. Our modern differences have largely arisen, not only because the English persisted in their attempt to bring up the Irish after their own pattern, but because the Irish, though vividly conscious of a separate national identity, did nearly their best to be English and completely failed. Where the English were dull, was in their attempt to throttle Irish civilization instead of allowing it to grow and develop in all its native vigour; and where the Irish were dull—dull beyond comprehension—was that while they with much noisy demonstration made a desperate stand for something which they called the eternal cause of Irish nationality, they did nearly their level best to turn themselves into Saxons.

Unfortunately it is difficult to get the Englishman to admit that there is any civilization in the world

other than British. (And anglicised Ireland naturally enough has come roughly to that conclusion too.) This is one of his most flagrant examples of dulness. When he talks of morality, he thinks only of the British variety, of liberty, progress, good taste, and so on; he shows somewhat more intelligence on the question of manners, for here he allows himself to be haunted by the suspicion that his may after all be only second rate. He wants to anglicise the world; and everything is tainted with barbarism that is not British. This heroic state of self-conceit is perhaps natural to a vigorous but dull race that has made its mark upon the world; but it is not founded upon truth. There are other worthier things between heaven and earth than English music halls, May meetings, company promoters, and bean feasts. These may represent some of the highest points of English civilization, but there are other struggling civilizations that will have little or none of them; that may, in fact, have the hardihood to look upon most of them with contempt. The world is divided into civilizations: for several reasons I think this word is more expressive than the word nation. And surely, on the principle of liberty, which England prides herself so much upon, each civilization has as much right to look out on the world in its own way, as an individual has of holding his own views. England will not admit this. I do not blame her for attempting to spread by legitimate means, that form of civilization which, as it is her own, she not unnaturally holds to be the best; but her impatience of, and her ill-mannered contempt for, other civilizations, her denial that, if they happen to be any way weak, there is any justification whatever for their existence, makes her hated all over the world; and I fear that when a weak civilization impedes her advance, killing stands in great danger of ceasing to

be murder. I think it would be a bad day for the world were one common form of civilization to embrace it all; when the individual and independent growth of separate nations was stopped. However, I cannot stay to develop this point now. I have used the word civilization instead of the word nation: the development of nationality is the natural development of a distinct civilization, and any power that kills the one, is guilty of the death of the other.

In Grattan's time Irish civilization was thrown overboard; but "Irish nationality" was stuck up on a flag of green—even the colour was new fledged—and the people were exhorted to go forward and cover themselves with glory. If I am right in equating nationality with a distinct civilization, we get now a vivid glimpse of the first great source of the insincerity—all the more insidious because unconscious—the muddled thinking, the confusion of ideas, the contradictory aims which even the most cursory observer discerns in the Ireland of to-day. Since Grattan's time every popular leader, O'Connell, Butt, Parnell, Dillon, and Redmond, has perpetuated this primary contradiction. They threw over Irish civilization whilst they professed—and professed in perfect good faith—to fight for Irish nationality. What potential genius that contradiction has choked, what dishonesties and tragedies, above all what comedies, it has been responsible for, I will pass over without detailed inquiry. The Irish all this time, as they are at the present day, were absolutely different from the English. The genius of each nation was distinct. To English ideals we did not respond; English literature did not kindle our minds: we continued to be born the brightest, and continued to be reared the most stupid and helpless of peoples. There is something, be it instinct or the living subconscious tradition of an almost dead civilization, that

says to nearly every Irish heart—"Thou shalt be Irish: thou shalt not be English." This is written plainly even over the history of the last hundred years—in every respect the most decadent century that Ireland has seen.

The propaganda of the Gaelic League has effected a partial revolution in Ireland. The criticism that it has inspired has been largely destructive; the energy it has let loose decidedly constructive. Much of the perpetual flow of wholesale and largely unreasonable denunciation of England was turned from its course and directed back—where it was badly wanted—upon Irishmen themselves; much of the energy that husbanded itself in idleness until certain political reforms were granted, commenced under the new inspiration to move and bestir itself at once. It is moving with increasing velocity as the conviction gains ground, that at last Ireland has gained some kind of a footing, and can advance—somewhere.

The League found Ireland wrangling over the corpse of Parnell. When A, who shouted one cry, called himself an Irish Nationalist, and declared with many strong adjectives that B, who shouted a different cry, was a West Briton, it began gradually to dawn upon the average mind that, as there was practically no difference between A and B but a cry, "Irish nationality" must be made of a very cloudy substance indeed. Under the inspiration of the new gospel of the Gaelic League, the common man, much to his surprise, was driven to the conclusion that A and B were, after all, a pair of ordinary, unmannerly, politicians, and nothing else. And then the light dawned upon him, that politics is not nationality, and that the nineteenth century had been for Ireland mostly a century of humbug. That, in brief, is the revolution that the Gaelic League has worked; and that revolution has fundamentally altered the Irish prob-

lem. Until a few years ago, no one challenged the accepted view that politics was the begin-all and end-all of Irish nationality. And as politics in Ireland consisted in booing against the English Government, and as Irish nationality was politics, the English Government became logically the sole destroyer of nationality. Of course it was an utterly false and an almost fatal position for us to have taken up. All the time that we were doing our share in the killing of our nation, everything was put down to England. An infallible way to distract criticism from domestic affairs—and this can be clearly seen by observing the state of the public temper in England at the present time—is to get entangled in a foreign war. When a great struggle is on hand, domestic reformers may sing for an audience. A people who are watching their nation in death-grips with another, are in little humour for attending to the parish pumps, least of all for listening to uncomplimentary criticism. But, supposing this condition of things lasted for a hundred years, what would become of the home economy? And this has practically been the condition under which Ireland has spent the century. We have been fighting England as our only enemy, looking to her as the sole source of all our evils, as the only possible source of all our blessings, inasmuch as until we had settled with her, we could do nothing for ourselves. All the while, like Pendennis, we ourselves were our greatest enemies. As politics was nationality, every patriotic Irishman who watched his decaying nation, felt new drops of hate for England descend into his heart. Until England could be brought to her senses no progress could be made, and as the life was all the time ebbing out of the Irish nation, then ten thousand curses be upon her oppressor. This attitude flows reasonably from the first false position that politics was nationality. When Ireland was

great, she sent men of learning and religion to instruct and enlighten Europe; when she was at her lowest ebb, she sent out desperadoes with infernal machines. The commandment, "Thou shalt be Irish," was written alike upon the hearts of all.

From the great error that nationality is politics, a sea of corruption has sprung. Ireland was practically left unsubjected to wholesome native criticism, without which any collection of humanity will corrupt. If a lack of industrial energy and initiative were pointed out, the answer naturally was — "Away, traitor. England robbed us of our industries; we can do nothing until she restores our rights." If you said that the people drank too much—"Well, what are the poor people to do; they are only human; wait until our rights are restored, and all that will be altered." And so on. To find fault with your countrymen was to play into the hands of England, and act the traitor. There were enough abusing us, without Ireland's own joining in the chorus. This was the negative side of the matter: there was a positive side also. It manifestly became the policy of Irishmen to praise and bolster up their own people, and make out the most glowing account of their virtues and importance. The minor political leaders let themselves loose over the country, telling their audiences that they belonged to a great and immortal nation, that they were engaged in a noble struggle for Irish freedom, and that the eyes of the civilized world were upon them. Irish popular oratory was corrupted under these influences into one string of uncomplimentary adjectives applied to England and the English, and another string of an opposite description applied to Ireland. Thought had been squeezed out of the platform and the press, and every vestige of distinctive nationality was fast leaving the country. This was certainly a pretty pass for a

quick-witted people to allow themselves to drift into. But once, I submit, that the Irish mind allowed itself to be muddled into considering politics and nationality convertible terms, the condition of things that resulted became, as an eminent Englishman might put it, "inevitable."

I will now attempt to trace, in broad outline, the influence which the state of things that I have referred to has had upon literary taste and literary production in Ireland, on social progress and the development of polite society, on the Irish attitude towards England and its powerful bearing upon the economic helplessness and stagnation of the country.

I think I have read somewhere that the great Duke of Marlborough knew no English history except that which he learned from Shakespeare's works. I mention this in order to point out that it takes an Englishman to get the most out of English literature, as it takes a Frenchman to get the most out of French literature. A literature steeped in the history, traditions, and genius of one nation is at the best only an imperfect tutor to the people of another nation; in fact, the common half-educated people of another nation will have none of it. The Irish nation has, this century, been brought up on English literature. Of course it never really kindled their minds or imaginations; they were driven to look at literature as a thing not understandable and above them—a position, I need scarcely say, not making for the development of self-respect or intellectual self-dependence. In most cases, when they left school they ceased to read anything but the newspapers. Of course there are many exceptions to this generalisation. If an Irishman received a higher English education, and lost touch with Irish aspirations, he practically became an Englishman; and many people with less advantages, by force of exceptional ability,

got their heads above the entanglements around them and breathed something like free air. But I am talking of the common run of men who make up a nation, and not of the few exceptions. Tell me of any ordinary man in Dublin, Cork, or elsewhere, who professes an appreciation for the best products of English literature, and I will have no hesitation in informing you that he is an intellectual snob, mostly composed of affectation. Literature, to the common Irishman, is an ingenious collection of fine words which no doubt have some meaning, but which he is not going to presume to understand. A good speaker in Ireland is not a man who talks keen sense well, but one with "the divil's flow of words"; and Irish "oratory" has developed into the windiest thing on earth. The state of literature, and thought, and original intellectual activity of any kind had indeed dropped to a low level. The "Irish National" literary output chiefly consisted of a few penny magazines in which the most commonplace rhymes were passed off as "Irish" poetry, and which contained an unceasing and spirit-wearying flow of romances about '48, '98, and other periods, in all of which, of course, Ireland was painted spotless white. Romances in which Irish heroes of a couple of hundred years ago, who probably never spoke a word of English in their lives, were made to prate heroics in English of the "Seest thou yon battlements" type, were so manifestly absurd that no one but very young boys could put up with them. Thought was necessarily absent from all this literature, for assuredly the first effort of thought would be to let the light through all this make-believe that passed current as part and parcel of "Irish national" literature. Criticism had died, and this sort of thing, along with "oratory," was allowed to swell like soap bubbles all over the land. The Irish people dropped off reading, not from any lack of intellectual desire,

but because nowhere was to be found that which would interest them. Then the great rise of cheap periodicals came about in England, and the market in Ireland was flooded with them. Ireland being a poor country, the cheapest class of periodicals only is within the popular resources, and it soon became evident that a grave evil was threatening us, and that Ireland was largely feeding on a questionable type of British reading matter. And the commandment—"Thou shalt be Irish"—was all the while troubling Irish hearts. . . .

If thought and literature dwindled away in modern Ireland, an inquiry into social life and manners presents even a more muddled and hopeless picture. It was all very well for people to say that everything would come straight when we obtained our rights from England, but in the meantime people had to do something, for what we understand in current language as "doing nothing" is in reality a form of doing something. Even those who shouted most about Irish Parliaments and Irish Republics were swayed by the general desire, common to all aspiring men, to be gentlemen of some kind, to be socially "superior," to reach to some point of social vantage. And in this department of Irish life we will observe the deepest muddle of all. What is a gentleman from the point of view of an English-speaking Irishman? Manifestly the same thing as a gentleman is in England. What are good breeding, good taste, etiquette, from the same man's point of view? Manifestly again the same as these things are in England. The English-speaking Irishman and the Englishman were children of one common civilization. Social advance under modern Irish conditions could therefore only lead in one way, and that way was in the direction of the English ideals. But there was still that commandment like a fallen oak across the road, barring the

way—"Thou shalt be Irish and not English." Here was a serious question which the modern Irishman had to solve. Like many another question, he refused to face it; he merely tried to shelve it. And too often he avoided becoming an English gentleman by becoming an Irish vulgarian. Ireland had either to advance socially along English lines or along Irish lines. She refused to do the former with any thoroughness; she had cut herself completely adrift from the latter. Had Ireland developed her own civilization, the manners and etiquette of Irish society would, I think, be very formal and elegant; but as she had thrown over Irish civilization, there was nothing for her to do but imitate England with the best grace she could. But the conventions and manners of English society, owing to various local and particular reasons, as well as in consequence of the radical difference in the genius of the two peoples, she found repellant to her. Society without conventions is necessarily vulgar and chaotic, and much of the social life of Ireland was driven to prove itself Irish by kicking against convention altogether. There are various degrees in this long procession of vulgarity, and those who had least convention were perhaps less vulgar than many mean-spirited imitators of every thing they considered English and "respectable." You would, I believe, search the world in vain for the equals of the latter class. English conventions were known to them mostly by hearsay, and these hearsay accounts they copied with a dog-like fidelity. They cultivated English accents, they sent their children to English schools, they tucked in their skirts from contact with the "low Irish," and they played tennis, not because they liked it, but because it was English and "respectable." However, if we look charitably upon them, and keep in mind the impossible conditions under which they were compelled to live, we shall find

much to say in their extenuation. Fate has revenged herself upon them, for she has decreed that all of them, from those who live in fashionable Dalkey, on through the ranks of the "gentleman farmers," down to the huxter who is making his son a doctor and his daughter a "lady," should be known to the world under the comprehensive title of "shoneens."

I now pass on to consider briefly the effect which the conditions of modern Ireland had upon our attitude towards England. A professed hatred of England, but not of things English, which is a different matter altogether, not illogically became part and parcel of Irish nationality. This led to more muddle. The Irish people do not hate England or any other country. As a matter of fact, the genius of our nation is far more prone to love than hate. There is no gospel of personal or national hate in our religion; we are told at our mothers' knees to love all men, including our enemies. But as England, in consequence of the situation I have attempted to sketch, became in our view the source of all our ills, was responsible not only for her own sins against us—which heaven knows are many and great—but also responsible for our own blunders and stupidity, she came in for a double dose of resentment. Whenever an Irishman contemplated anything hurtful to his national pride, a curse against England gurgled in his throat. No wonder Englishmen completely misunderstood us, and classed us as a lot of grown-up children, when Ireland swayed and writhed in a helpless entanglement herself. It was certainly difficult to deal satisfactorily with a country that had missed her own path, and had only a very muddled idea of what she wanted herself. All this light has been thrown upon Ireland by the propaganda of the Gaelic League. It has compelled us to ask ourselves the elementary question—What is Irish nationality, and what in

reality do we want to see realised in Ireland? Will a few soldiers dressed in green, and a republic, absolutely foreign to the genius of the Irish people, the humiliation of England, a hundred thousand English corpses with Irish bullets or pike wounds through them, satisfy the instinct within us that says: "Thou shalt be Irish"? These things we probably can never see, though we may try to drown our national conscience by dreaming of them. But were they possible, they were vain; for a distinct nation is a distinct civilization, and if England went down to the bottom of the sea to-morrow, that distinct civilization which we have turned our backs upon, that woof of national tradition which we have cast from us, would not be restored. Our nation cannot be resurrected merely by the weakness of England, but mainly by the strength and effort of Ireland herself. This then is the new situation that has been created—the political disabilities of Ireland remain, and the political fight must go on until they are redressed, but England stands in our mental view no longer as the sole destroyer of Irish nationality; we have learned that we ourselves have been acting like fools, that we, during this century, have been the greatest sinners against that nationality whose death we were only too anxious to lay at the door of England. The Irish nationality that has sprung merely from a misguided hatred, or affected hatred, of England has not been a brilliant success, if we judge it by its fruits. Hate, I suggest, inspires nothing but destruction. And looking over this great century during which the civilized world has made such strides, we find that Ireland, representing one of the oldest and independent civilizations, has attempted nothing and achieved nothing. She has gone back in every department where other nations have advanced. She threw away her initiative and her language, and became a mean

and sulky imitator of another people whom she professed to hate. Whilst clamouring and organising insurrections to bring about something which she called "National Independence," she willingly cast away the main functions of independent existence, which, notwithstanding English misgovernment, she was still in a large measure free to exercise.

The baneful effect of the state of things that I have attempted to describe did not stop at literature, public opinion, and social development; it sapped the very foundations of economic advance. At the first blush it may appear a far-fetched idea that there is a strong connection between the development of a native civilization having its roots in the native language, and the production of economic wealth. English thought was, until comparatively recently, in a rather muddled state over economics; and it passes the understanding of modern man to comprehend by what mental process certain not very old theories were held by the best thinkers of those days. We have come now to see that land, though an indispensable, is by no means the main, source of modern economic wealth. Human skill in all its manifold manifestations has taken the premier place, and conditions precedent to the production of that skill are the existence of initiative and self-dependence. If you have to begin with a self-distrusting people who are afraid to rely on their own judgment, who have learnt by a long and reluctant effort to imitate a rich and highly developed people foreign to their genius, to conceive a mean and cringing opinion of themselves, you will never get much economic initiative out of them. You will find it difficult to raise what economists call their "standard of comfort." Creatures may heave bricks and draw water, but it takes men to command, to think, to initiate, to organise, and to will. The first step in the acquirement of skill

is a man, and if you have not a man but a sulky, imitating being to begin with, it is a poor look-out for your economic projects. For behind and above the economics of a nation is the heart of a nation. And Anglo-Ireland of to-day has no heart. It is led by a hempen cord and frightened by a shadow. The economic ills of Ireland can be traced to many diverse minor causes, but if you follow them up you arrive at the great common source—the lack of Irish heart. Ireland has not courage to say—I will wear this, or, I will not wear that. So the draper from Ballyduff goes to London,—sometimes he gives out that he has been as far as Paris,—and a hideous poster in three colours announces that the latest novelties and fashions from London and Paris have arrived. This sends a thrill through the households of the village. The greasy draper rubs his hands and dilates on "the circulation of money"; and the moss on the still wheels of the village mill weeps for the native heart of other days. Ireland, because she has lost her heart, imports to-day what, on sound economic principles, she could produce for herself. She who once gave ideas to the world, begs the meanest tinsel from that world now. She is out in the cold amongst the nations, standing on a sort of nowhere, looking at a civilization which she does not understand, refuses to be absorbed into, and is unable to copy. She exports cattle, drink, and human beings; and she imports, amongst other things, men with initiative and heart. A dolt from England manages a naturally able man born of the soil, because the dolt uses his head, such as it is, and the native of the soil has lost his heart. The great modern economic tradition of Ireland is simply this—Nothing Irish succeeds! We have not even heart to amuse ourselves, and our "humour" and our "drama"—God save us from most of both—are imported, as well as our shoddy.

The tinker of thought—and modern Ireland is full of that type—has traced the ills of Ireland to everything in turns and to nothing long. His curses and complainings are ever floating over the seas; and he stands by the side of a native civilization that he has neglected almost unto death, and is never inspired to exclaim: "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul!" In fact, he is not aware that he ever had a civilization. He frets and moans and curses as he gropes in the dark recesses between two of them. If I were autocrat of Ireland to-morrow, and someone were to come to me and ask what I wanted most, I should have no hesitation in answering—Men. And if we are to have men, we must make the population of Ireland either thoroughgoing English or thoroughgoing Irish. No one who knows Ireland will entertain for a moment the idea that the people can be made English; the attempt has been made, and a country of sulky, dissatisfied, and self-distrusting mongrels is the result. Ireland will be nothing until she is a nation, and as a nation is a civilization, she will never accomplish anything worthy of herself until she falls back upon her own language and traditions, and, recovering there her old pride, self-respect, and initiative, develops and marches forward from thence.

I have attempted to trace the evil effects arising from our efforts to imitate England whilst the commandment "Thou shalt be Irish" is written upon our hearts. I hope I am no quack. The influences that mould a nation are infinite, and cannot be clearly grasped by the human mind. We can only hope to trace them in the broadest outline. Of what English legislation has done to undo Ireland I have a lively appreciation, but that matter does not come within the scope of this article. I have confined myself to an inquiry into the effects of causes which it is within Ireland's power, and within her power alone, to remove.

The only hope that I see for Ireland is that she may set to work to create what does not exist now, what mere political independence, a parliament in College Green, or the humiliation of British arms, will not necessarily bestow — to create a nation. Abroad, during this century, wherever Irishmen have unreservedly thrown themselves in with the particular civilization of their adopted countries, they have done honour alike to themselves and their neighbours. During previous centuries Spain and France and other countries had hundreds of thousands of our bravest and our best, and well, and not without good reason, were they welcomed. The Irishman of modern times has succeeded in every land but his own. For at home is the only place where he cannot make up his mind—he will not be one thing or the other, he will not be English or Irish. Grattan, though not a great statesman, was visited with many vivid flashes of insight. The history of this century gives a new and deeper meaning to one sentence he uttered more than a hundred years ago concerning the relations of Ireland and England. "As her equal we shall be her sincerest friend; as anything less than her equal we shall be her bitterest enemy." Unless we are a nation we are nothing, and the growth of a civilization springing from the roots of one of the oldest in Europe, will alone make us a nation, give us scope to grow naturally, give us something to inspire what is best in us, cultivate our national pride and self-respect, and encourage our self-dependence. Marching along that line, the hurt or humiliation of England will cease, must cease, to be our ambition; for our master-passions will be wrapped up in the construction of our own nation, not in the destruction of another. Whether an Ireland of the future, relying upon her own genius, will ever do for mankind what the old Ireland of the early centuries did with such

generosity, love, and enthusiasm for Europe, is a matter for faith rather than for speculation. The prospect of such a new Ireland rising up out of the foundations of the old, with love and not hate as its inspiration, has already sent a great thrill through the land. It is a new and unlooked-for situation, full with fate, not only for Ireland, but for the world.

LITERATURE AND THE IRISH LANGUAGE

By George Moore

The following was given as a speech at a meeting of the supporters of the Irish Literary Theatre in February 1900, and was afterwards published in the *New Ireland Review*.

I do not agree with Mr. Moore in thinking there will be but few in the theatre who will understand an Irish play. He underrates the success of the Language Movement in Dublin. —EDITOR.

I FEEL that I must apologise for appearing before you with a MS. of my speech in my hand. The sight of a MS. in the country where oratory flourishes everywhere, in all ranks of society and in all conditions of intellect, must appear anomalous and absurd. But I am an exception among my gifted countrymen. I have not inherited any gift of improvisation, and the present is certainly no time for experiment, for I believe I have a matter of importance to lay before you, and it will be less labour for you to give the extra attention which the consideration of the written phrase demands than to reduce to order the painful jumble of words and ideas, mixed with painful hesitations, which is the public speech of every one except the born orator.

Of the plays which were performed this week I do not intend to speak, and of the plays which the Irish Literary Theatre hopes to produce next year I only propose to say that Mr. Yeats and myself are writing a play entitled *Grania and Darmuid.* A more suitable subject than the most popular of our epic stories could hardly be found for a play for the Irish Literary Theatre, and I may say that it would be difficult to name any poet that Ireland has yet produced more truly elected by his individual and racial genius to interpret the old legend than the distinguished poet whose contemporary and collaborateur I have the honour to be. But even if this play should prove to be that dramatic telling of the great story which Ireland has been waiting for these many years, it will not, in my opinion, be the essential point of next year's festival, for next year we have decided to give a play in our own language—the language which, to our great disgrace, we do not understand. Alas! there will be fewer in the theatre who will understand the Irish text than a Latin or a Greek one; so the play will be performed for the sake of the example

it will set. The performance of plays in our language is part and parcel of the Irish Literary Theatre, which was founded to create a new centre of Irish enthusiasm, a new outlet for the national spirit and energy.

Lady Gregory, Mr. Martyn, Mr. Yeats, and myself were all agreed as to the necessity of producing a play in our original language; but I am responsible for the decision to produce a translation rather than an original play in Irish. In my opinion an original play in Irish would be too hazardous an adventure.[1] The art of writing for the stage is not easily acquired, the number of Irish writers is limited, and to produce a bad play written in Irish would be a misfortune. Moreover, I wish our first Irish play to rest on a solid literary foundation, so that it may be possessed of a life beyond its stage life, which is necessarily transitory. I wish to present those who read our language with a piece of solid literature, and for this end my choice fell on a play at once simple and literary, *The Land of Heart's Desire*, by Mr. W. B. Yeats. It will be translated by Dr. Douglas Hyde, whose Irish scholarship has passed beyond question. . . . Mr Yeats will make what further explanations he deems advisable regarding his play, and I will hasten to speak on the subject on which I have come to speak to you—the necessity of the revival of the language if Ireland is to preserve her individuality among nations.

It will be conceded to me that the three great distinctions of nations are—Religion, Language, Law. The distinction of religion Ireland holds secure; for this distinction she has suffered robbery, violence, and contumely, but on this point I do not think I need insist. She has struggled no less fiercely for the

[1] Dr. Hyde has, since this speech was made, written a play in Irish for our Literary Theatre, *Casad na Sugan*, full of humour and pathos, which will, I think, upset Mr. Moore's theories by its success.—EDITOR.

distinction of law. But for the third distinction, the distinction of language, she has shown less determination and perseverance. Fellow-countrymen, the language is slipping into the grave, and if a great national effort be not made at once to save the language it will be dead in another generation. We must return to the language. It came we know not whence or how; it is a mysterious inheritance, in which resides the soul of the Irish people. It is through language that a tradition of thought is preserved, and so it may be said that the language is the soul of a race. It is through language that the spirit is communicated, and it is through language that a nation becomes aware of itself.

My fellow-countrymen, the language is slipping into the grave, and what you have to remember is, that when the language is dead the soul of Cuchillin, which we all share still a little, will have vanished. The restoration of the language is the nation's need; even if we had a National Government, it would not be a real National Government if the language had perished, for the Celt would have been robbed of his original home.

We want our language; we desire it with our whole heart and soul. Our desire may be foolish, unpractical, unwise, according to the lights of the English nation at the present moment; but our desire is our desire, our folly is our own, and if we wish to start ill equipped in the business race of the world, knowing no language which is understood outside of Ireland, shall we be gainsaid like children? But this is not our desire; our desire is to make Ireland a bi-lingual country—to use English as a universal language, and to save our own as a medium for some future literature.

That a nation should express itself in the language fashioned by the instinct of the race out of its ideas

and spiritual aspirations is, I think, certain. On the possibility of reviving a language, of making a dying language the literary and political language of a country, little is known. It is said that when the Welsh began the language movement there were only 10,000 who spoke Welsh, and that to-day there are nine times the number. It is vain to consider possibilities; we must strive for what is noblest, and I know no more noble ideal to strive for than the re-establishment of our language in our country.

You will be told that these are sentimental reasons, transcendental reasons. Well, I know of no better reasons; all other reason is merely for the moment. You will be told that out of Ireland no one will understand the language, and therefore, for the practical purpose of earning a livelihood, it will be useless. You will be told that for the purposes of art the language is useless, that ancient Irish literature is formless folk-tales, and that in modern Irish there is no literature whatever. You will be told that if a genius such as Burns should arise to-morrow among the Irish peasantry and write his great work in Irish it would remain unread. Ibsen writes a language which is spoken by very few millions, yet his plays are read all over Europe, and the old Irish poems, written in a form no longer spoken, are known to European scholars. There is no such thing as a beautiful unknown page of literature, there is no such thing as a beautiful unknown poem, there is no such thing as a beautiful unknown line of poetry. Were a great work written in Irish to-morrow, in a few years it would have travelled all over Europe. To the objection often urged against the Irish language, that it is not as suitable for literary purposes as English, I answer that a language wears out like a coat. The Latin language, which had said all it was capable of saying at the end of the second century, became

from the third to the tenth — I might say to the twelfth century—the common language of Europe: the language of the Court, the Church, and the library. Thousands of volumes of poetry were written in the Latin language between the third and twelfth centuries, but all these books have been forgotten, and to explain this oblivion we must assume that in eight hundred years in no country in Europe a great man of letters was born, or that the Latin language had expressed all that it was capable of expressing. Dante began his poem in Latin; he wrote two cantos in Latin before he discovered the Latin language to be incapable of literary expression, then turning to the vernacular, he made it at once into the medium of his high purpose, and Italy produced a new literature: but Greece, which clung to her ancient language, in which all had been said that the language was capable of saying, has produced no new literature. And as it was with the Latin in the fourth, so it is with English in the nineteenth century. From universal use and journalism, the English language in fifty years will be as corrupt as the Latin of the eighth century, as unfit for literary usage, and will become, in my opinion, a sort of volapuk, strictly limited to commercial letters and journalism.

Walter Pater, England's last great writer, said that he wished to write in English as in a learned language. The language, he thought, had reached the same stage of decay as the Latin language had reached in the second century. He knew he was writing in a decaying language, and he treated it as such. Since his death we have seen the English language pass through the patty-pans of Stevenson into the pint-pot of Mr. Kipling. If we would write with distinction we must do as Pater did, compile a special vocabulary, and strip ourselves of all ideas and words except those which seem to us to reflect the intimate

colour of our minds. It would seem that it is only by narrowing our hearts and limiting our words that we can write at all now. The opposite was the practice of the ancient writers, who opened their hearts to all the ideas of their time, and accepted the idiom of their beautiful streets. Ancient architecture, whether in palace or in cottage, is beautiful; all the coins and weapons and pottery of the ancient world are beautiful. And finding beauty in every corner of ancient life, can we doubt that our ancestors spoke more beautiful English than we do?

It was with the Renaissance that the individual note came into art, for as life declined in beauty the personal selection of the artist became necessary. But Michael Angelo, his predecessors and his contemporaries, worked in co-operation with the spirit of their time; even the art of Reynolds and Gainsborough is conclusive of the taste of the eighteenth century. The art of Manet, Whistler, Degas, Pater, and Ibsen is the art of protest, and every year the protest of the artist against the taste of the multitude will become sterner, more energetic. The art world which was an antiquity, and which the Renaissance revived, and of which some traces linger down to the present day, is passing away, and the commercial world which has begun is the worst form of barbarism which has yet been seen. Those who believe that dreams, beauty, and divine ecstasy are essential must pray that all the empires may perish and the world be given back to the small peasant states, whose seas and forests and mountains shall create national aspirations and new gods. Otherwise the world will fall into gross naturalism, into scientific barbarism more terrible than the torch and the sword of the Hun. . . . The commercial platitude which has risen up in England, which is extending over the whole world, is horrible to contemplate. Its flag, which

Mr. Rhodes has declared to be "the most valuable commercial asset in the world," is everywhere. England has imposed her idea upon all nations, and to girdle the world with Brixton seems to be her ultimate destiny. And we, sitting on the last verge, see into the universal suburb, in which a lean man with glasses on his nose and a black bag in his hand is always running after his bus.

My fellow-countrymen, the moment has come to save, or let perish, our language. It is the one sod of Irish earth on which we can all stand united. In this cause every one may help, landlord and peasant alike, nationalist and unionist, and a cause cannot be a lost cause to which every one can contribute: some by learning the language, some with sums of money, some by having their children taught the language. In my youth Irish was still spoken everywhere; but the gentry took pride in not understanding their own language. It was our misfortune that such false fashion should have prevailed and kept us in ignorance of our language, but it will be our fault if our children do not learn their own language. I have no children and am too old to learn the language, but I shall at once arrange that my brother's children shall learn Irish. I have written to my sister-in-law telling her that I will at once undertake this essential part of her children's education. They shall have a nurse straight from Aran; for it profits a man nothing if he knows all the languages of the world and knows not his own.

WHAT IRELAND IS ASKING FOR

By Douglas Hyde
(An Craoibhin Aoihbin)

This article is a translation from the Irish.—EDITOR.

WHAT is the chief cause that has put Ireland so much back now compared with other countries on this side of Europe? The answer I will give is, there are many causes, but the chief cause is—bad teaching. A country without teaching is not a real country, but a piece of earth on which a lot of people are set, without knowledge of the good beyond the bad, or of truth beyond falsehood. That is what Ireland is like. There have been schools in it for the last sixty years that have killed the mind of the country. Is there any other country in the world where we can find schoolmasters who have only one language teaching children who have only one language, and the language of the schoolmaster not the same as the language of the children? Schoolmasters "teaching" children that do not understand them, and children "learning" from masters they do not understand!

When these schools were set on foot, schools that were sarcastically given the name "National Schools," Irish was the language of the country, from Galway to Dublin, and from Waterford to Donegal, except among the Scotch of the province of Ulster. But then masters were put to teach (or to destroy) the children who had no English, and the end of the story is that they put broken English in the place of pure Irish through three-quarters of the island. With broken English came the laying waste of the mind of a people who were as quick in speech, as quick in business, as able, as witty as any people in the whole of Europe, but were left as blind, as dull, and as dark as any wild untaught natives.[1]

[1] The following appeared in an article in *All Ireland Review*, November 3, 1900: "The present writer recently heard the teacher of a school in an Irish-speaking district of Connemara describing the process of dealing with the mind of a little child: 'The first thing we have to do is to wring the Irish out of them,' and making a motion with the hands as if twisting a cloth,—'we wring the Irish out of them, and then they can begin to understand what we teach them.' 'And how long does it take to wring the Irish out?' 'About two years,' was the reply."

It may be thought that I am speaking too strongly on this subject. I am not adding one inch to the truth. The English schools have robbed the Gael of all that he had,—listen to the sum of things they have taken from him. In the first place, they have taken away his language, and with the language has gone his music, for they were bound together, and with his music has gone his light heart. They have taken from him his poems and his songs and his old sayings and his stories, and they have taken away his knowledge of the history of his country and of his forefathers, for they, too, were bound up with the language, and when it was taken from him they went also. They have taken from him his wit and his quickness and his deep thinking, for he can never bring out the deep things that are in him in the broken English that has been put in his mouth; and the man that is without stories, without music, without poems, without traditions, without knowledge of the history of his country and of his own forefathers—it is not usual for that man to have any thought at all, except the trivial thoughts that come to him from the wants of the hour. This is how Ireland and the Irish are left now, and it is little wonder that the people should be so backward and so ignorant as they are.

And it is not only the poor people who have suffered like this, but big people in the same way. If an Irishman were as learned as a Chief Olamh in all the things that related to Ireland and the Irish, there was not a penny of profit to be got out of that knowledge. Everything was banished that belonged to Ireland, and the Gael out of the lower schools and out of the high schools and out of the colleges. Nothing was taught but things that did not belong to Ireland, things that were of special interest to the Engli[illegible], or things that were common to the whole

world. No one could think it possible to build up an intelligent people on that road—but men with no knowledge of the human mind. It is not in such a manner that other countries teach. A friend of mine was in Denmark, and he was astonished at the amount of wealth got out of so poor a country by dairies and by farming. "No doubt," said my friend to a well-educated Dane, "the children are instructed in the schools as to dairying and farming."

"They are not," said the Dane, "but they are taught the old Danish poems (sagas) in the schools; that makes good Danes of the children, and then they become good farmers."

That is a true word!

Our Commissioners of Education have succeeded in making bad Irishmen by millions, but they have never succeeded, and they never will succeed, by their method in making good farmers of them.

There are now a hundred and fifty branches of the Gaelic League, and it is the sure belief of everyone who is in them that Ireland will always be backward until every Irishman learns to have respect for himself and, as well as that, love for his country. "Respect for ourselves and love for our country"—that is the grip for the people to raise themselves with. We are all convinced that they will never raise themselves without that. And there are educated men amongst us that came from the people, and that live among the people, and that know the people twenty times better than the lords and gentlemen who sit on the National Board, and everyone of them knows that this is the truth.

Now, what is the cure for this mischief? What is there for us to do to make the Irishman respected again, himself and his children? It is, the Gaelic League says, to change the teaching, and teach Irish-wise henceforth and not English-wise. In any place

where the old tongue is living, teach through the old tongue, and in any place where it is dead, allow the people to learn it, if they desire it. Teach the history of Ireland to the children of Ireland. Give liberty to every school to teach history if it chooses, to teach its own choice of history; not a tasteless, feeble, history, but a popular history that will have sap and pleasure in it, a history that will take a grip of the child. It is an abuse beyond bounds that there should be a man on the Board who will not allow Irish history to be read in any school unless it teaches lies, unless it teaches the children that their forefathers that came before them were naked savages, without learning, without character, without any sort of good behaviour. That man would not allow Irish children to learn Irish history unless the history contains falsehoods like this.[1] This shows he has never given any heed to human nature. If you take a young boy, a boy who has come from a gentle and honourable stock, and if you put in his head that his father was but a tinker and that his mother was but a beggar woman, do you think you increase that boy's honour or his respect for himself, or that you make his conduct or his behaviour better, or that you do him any good at all? No good ever came of a lie, but miserable harm will come of a lie of this sort. The rock that is the foundation-stone of the Gaelic League is "The Irish mind" and "Respect for our race," and if this is allowed to us we will build up some certain thing upon it; but the people of

[1] These are the words of Dr. Fitzgerald, who is now at this moment directing the education of Ireland on the path that pleases him. He has refused leave for a certain history to be read in the schools because, he says: "No child reading this would gather that the Irishry spoken of were for hundreds of years before 1600 A.D. a pack of naked savages, whose habits were an abomination to all civilized people and a sore trial to the good monks and others who tried in vain for generations to improve them."

the Board wanted in the past to make their own hovel on a wet bog, and without any stone foundation under it, but contempt of the people for themselves, and contempt for and ignorance of their race. They will never rear anything till the day of Judgment on their rotten foundations, but a thing without strength, without goodness, without profit, not to be put in comparison with the building of other countries. The greater share of those who are directing the education of the Irish are politicians; their teaching was intended to throw education back, and their desire was not to make an understanding people of the Irish, but to make them an Englishised people. And with the hope of making them good Englishmen in the end, they began by making bad Irishmen of them, and that is a bad beginning.

There is Irish teaching wanted in this country, and the country itself has this long time been calling on the Board to give it. The Catholic Bishops ask for it, the managers of twelve hundred schools ask for it, the hundred and fifty branches of the Gaelic League ask for it, the County Councils and Rural Councils in their hundreds ask for it, but they have not got it. There is no free country in the whole of Christendom where, if the people of the country asked such a thing as this with one will and one voice, as has been done in Ireland, it would not be given at once as a matter of course. But it is not so in Ireland. If there is any little thing we want in this country we have to begin to wrangle and to make a disturbance and put fights and tumults on foot, much as the English would have to do if they wanted to disestablish the House of Lords. And yet people tell us that this is a free country! The National Board is not under the authority of Parliament itself, and the whole nation has asked it to give us sensible Irish teaching, and we are none the better off. It is not possible for us to

ask more strongly than we have asked. There is nothing else we can do without breaking the peace. And people still say this is a free country!

The high schools and colleges of Ireland are now doing their very best to build up people in the likeness of the people who are brought up in England. But if they will think for a moment they will see their folly.

We do not agree by any means that the same education that suits the English suits also the Irish, and it is not in our mind that an English education is better than an Irish one for Irish boys. If all who are brought up in these schools were to go to England when they grow up, or to make their home among Englishmen, it would be possible to think there was some little right on the side of the directors of these schools; but when it is sure and certain that the greater part of them will stay at home in Ireland itself, or go amongst their kinsmen in America, then we must be dissatisfied at seeing them without the Irish education that is fitting for them.

If I am asked what is an Irish education, I would say that it is one that teaches the student, as a matter of course, everything that relates to Ireland and the Irish before teaching things relating to England and the English. I would say that if people are to live all their life in Ireland (as most of us are) it is much more necessary to them to have a knowledge of things relating to Ireland, the place where they are going to live, than of things relating to England, where they are not going to live. This is according to nature, and I do not think there is another country in the world where this truth is forgotten as it is here.

I do not think there is any other country in the world where the men who are in charge of the education of the people are not accountable either to the

people or to the Government; nor do I think there is any other country in the world where the riches, and the endowments, and the treasures of learning, that belong to the country, are left in the keeping of men so blinded with politics and with religious bigotry as are the greater share of the learned men in "that English fort," Trinity College.

"THE RETURN OF THE FENIANS"

By an Craoibhin Aoibhin

I have translated this, like the preceding article, from the Irish. I give, however, the original of the "Return of the Fenians" as well as the Translation, as it loses much of its fantastic charm in the change of language.

The idea of the return of the Fenians one day—of Finn and his strong men in one form or another—has lasted through all the Christian centuries. In an Irish poem written by a priest in the seventeenth century he speaks of the women of Ireland as

"Tearing their hair with troubled minds,
Keening pitifully after the Fenians."

I think it is connected in peasant tradition with the coming of "Men from the North," when, as I have been told, "there will be dark nights and bloody blankets," and the last great battle of the world will be fought in which all the enemies of Ireland will be destroyed. After this there will be no more fighting, for the ideals and hopes of each generation will be attained in the return of the strong men, in the thousand years' peace, in the coming back of the Golden Age.—EDITOR.

Do not be discouraged for ever,
Putting anxiety and a mist on your heart,
And you thinking and saying
That poor Ireland will be destroyed without help. . . .

It is a long time we are waiting,
Weeping without ceasing, and keening,
With the hope the day will come at last
That the pain will be taken from us,
That it is short until the coming of the Fenians.

. . . . . .

What is this darkness on the sky? What is this blackness on the sun? What is this mist overhead, robbing us of daylight, choking us with its weight? —look at the dark cloud getting wider and larger, look at it putting out two wings like a great crow from one side of the sky to the other. What is it? And look at the people at the doors of their houses looking up and sighing. What makes them draw their breath so heavily, as if they were smothering? Why do they look so pale and so joyless, like people who have lost all the courage they had, like people waiting for the sea to rise over their heads, or the mountains to fall on them. What sort of a sky is that, what country is that, what people are those?

Ah! friend of my heart, it is I that will tell you; that is the bright country of Ireland in which you are standing, and that is the Irish sky over your head, and those are the people of Ireland that stand at the door of their houses!

But what has come on them that they should look like this? Why are they being choked and smothered by something they cannot see, and what is that great black cloud overhead?

It is that cloud which is choking them; they are smothered by the blast of that cloud,—that cloud is like the great black wings of a crow stretched out between us and the blessed light of the sun, and he

breathing poison from his beak to snatch away the minds and the courage of the people, and to put fog and cold into their hearts.

Is it a sorcerer the crow is, to be able to do this thing?

I will tell you what it is. It is the English mind, it is the Englishing of Ireland. The sky is smothered by it and the sun is chilled by it, the light is driven away by it, and it is it that has cast the fog and frost on the hearts of the poor people who live to-day on the grass-green sod of Ireland. There was a day when the sun shone as bright and as warm on our country as on any country that he ever kissed. There was a day when this sky was so pure and so bright that the people could not but laugh with the dint of joy, they to be living under it. There was a day once when there was courage and great gladness, strength and high-mindedness in the people, who are now so pitiable and so discouraged. A change came on them, and look at what they are now!

And I tell you the truth, if you were never told the truth till now, that the bow is already made, with which some mother's son will put an arrow through that monstrous poisonous crow that did us this harm, and that took the warmth of the sun from us.

It is myself that will tell you the truth. There is no bow in the world that will put a bolt through that bird but the bow that is bent, and is made ready by the little troop of fighters whose gathering place is the Gaelic League; and they are working every day to get their share of arrows ready, and to put strings to their bows, and to prepare bolts to fling at the crow, and it is in the prophecy that they shall yet send an arrow through his body from one side to the other, and the name of that arrow will be—"Our Own Language."

And he will go away drivelling, shedding heavily

his share of blood, and he will be putting out a thousand cries and a thousand ohones! I tell you that I see the day coming when those dark wings will be hunted away, and the people that are half dead and half smothered will hold up their heads again, and many of those who went far away beyond the sea, to escape from the foul breath of that great crow, will return again, and will live in quiet and in content among their friends and their kindred. And gladness and high courage will be among us again, and the people who have no understanding will understand, and the people that have no learning will learn, and the people that could not write will be writing, and the people will perform feats that never performed one, and the people that did not work will be working, and the people that did not plant will be planting, and the people that did not grow will be growing, and the people that never thought will be thinking, and the people that had forgotten will remember, and the people that are crying will be laughing, and the people that were not wise will be full of wisdom, and the people that were hushed will be shouting.

They will stand without chains on body or mind, free in the presence of God and the people. And this time is not far off. "It is a short time till the coming of the Fenians."

There is a change coming, a big change!
And riches and store will be worth nothing;
He will rise up that was small enough,
And he that was big will fall down.

The time will come, and it's not far from us,
When strength won't be on the side of authority or law,
And the neck will bend that was not bent,—
When that time comes it will come heavily.

When that time comes it will come heavily:
He will grow fat that was lean,
He will grow lean that was fat;
Without shelter for the head, without mirth, without help.

The low will be raised up, says the poet;
The thing that was high will be thrown down again,
The world will be changed from end to end;—
When that time comes it will come heavily.

If you yourself see this thing coming,
And the country without luck, without law, without authority,
Swept with the storm, without knowledge, without strength,
Remember my words, and don't let your heart break.

This life is like a tree,
The top green, branches soft, bark fine and shining,
But there is a little worm shut up in it,
Sucking at the sap all through the day.

But from the old cold withered tree
A new plant will grow up again;
The old world will die without pity,
But the young world will grow up on its grave.

Filleadh na Féinne.

Ná bíodh bhoc-mheirneach go deó
Ag fíor-chur an cheó ar bun gcroídhe
Agus fíb-re ag fmuaineadh 'r ag fáidh,
Go bhfuil Éire bocht cháidhte gan bhríg.

* * * *

Atámaoid ag fanamhaint le fad,
Ag gol gan ftad a'r ag caoi,
Ag fúil go dtiucfaidh an lá
Dhíbeórar an cháidh ro dhinn,
A'r go dtiucfaidh go goirid an Fhiann,
An buidhean nár ghéill do'n Aoir,
Agus fárfaidh an chann bí chíon
Fá bláth agus fgéimh arís.
Ir goirid go dtiucfaidh an Fhiann.

* * * *

Cad é an dorchadus ro ar an fpéir? Cad é an duibhe reo ar an ngréin? cad é an fmúid reó or ár gcionn, ag baint dínn foluis an lae, 7 ag ár dtachtadh, tá rí chom thom rin? Feuch an néall duibh ag leachnughadh 7 ag fíor-leachnughadh, feuch é ag cur amach dá fgiathán dhe fein mar fhreáchán mór, ó thaoibh go taoibh na fpéire. Cad é? Agus feuch na daoine ag dorfus a dtighthead ag dearcadh fuar air, 7 ag ornaoil. Cad fáth bhfuilid ag tarfaing a n-anála chom thom rin, amhail 7 dá mbeithís d'á múchadh. Cad fáth a bhféachann fiad chom bán 7 chom mí-líthead rin, mar daoine do chaill gach meirneach do bí aca,

mar daoine atá ag fanamhaint leis an bhfairrge d' eirighe or a gcionn, no leis na fleidhtibh do chuitim 'na mullach? Cad é an fórt fhéirde í sin, cad é an tír í fed, cia h-iad na daoine?

Óra! a charaid mo chroidhe, innfeódaidh mise sin duit. Ar talam geal na h-Eireann atá tu i d' fhearamh, 7 sin fhéil na h-Eireann or do chionn, 7 sin muinntir na h-Eireann atá ag dorus na dtighead.

Acht cad do bheir orra féachaint mar sin, cad fádh bhuil riad d'á múchadh 7 dá dtachtadh ag fud éigin nach léir dóibh, 7 cad é an néall áirdhéal dubh sin or a gcionn?

Is é an néall do chíd tu atá d'á múchadh, tá riad tachtta ag an aér ó'n néall sin. Amhail fheáchán mór dubh, atá an néall sin 7 a dá fhiachán sinte amach aige eidir sinn 7 solus na gréine beannuighte 7 é ag féidheadh neimhe ar a gob, ag baint a n-aigne 7 a meisnigh de na daoinibh 7 ag cur ceó 7 fuachta ar a gcroidhe.

Cia h-é an dhaoidheachta tug cúmhacht do'n fhéachán an nídh sin do dhéanamh?

Innfeódaidh mé sin duit. Sin fhiosrad na Sacranach, sin an bhéarlachar. Tá an ghrian múchta aige, tá an fhéil fuaraighte aige, tá an solus dídhirte aige, 7 is é do fhag an ceó 7 an driuc ar chroidhthibh na ndaoine bocht atá indiú ar thalamh fhó-ghlas na h-Eireann. Do bí uaim, ann, 7 do lonnuigh an ghrian com geal 7 com teith or cionn na tíre fed 7 do lonnuigh rí or cionn aon tíre dá'r fhóg rí ariamh. Do bí uaim, ann, a raibh an fhéil fed com glan 7 com geal sin gur bain rí gáir lúthgháire ar na daoinibh le teann-áthas iad do bheith beó

fúiṫi. Do bí uaiṛ, ann, a ṛaiḃ meiṛneaċ ⁊ móṛ-ṁeanma, aiġeantaċt ⁊ árd-innṫleaċt in ṛna daoiniḃ ṛin, atá anoiṛ ċoṁ ṫruaiġṁéileaċ ⁊ ċoṁ laġḃṛíġeaċ ṛin. Táiniġ aċṛuġaḋ oṛṛa ⁊ feuċ anoiṛ.

Agus innṛim duit an ṛíṛinne munaṛ h-innṛeaḋ duit ṛuaṁ go dti reó í. Tá an bóṫa déanta ċeana a ġcuiṛṛeaṛ mac máṫaṛ éiġin uṛċaṛ, leiṛ, tṛíd an bṛṛéaċán úṛ-ġṛánna neiṁneaċ do ṛinne an díoġḃáil ṛin ⁊ do ḃain dínn teaṛ na ġṛéine.

Innṛeóċaiḋ miṛe an ṛíṛinne duit. Ní'l bóṫa aṛ an doṁan a ċuiṛṛeaṛ uṛċaṛ tṛíd an éan ṛin, acт an bóṫa atá anoiṛ d'á ċumaḋ ⁊ dá ġléaṛaḋ aġ dṛeam beag de ġaiṛġiḋiḃ a ḃṛuil a n-áit-cṛuinniġte ann ṛan GCONNRAD, ⁊ tá ṛiad ṛin ó lá go lá aġ ullṁuġaḋ a ġcuid raiġeaḋ, ⁊ aġ lúḃaḋ a ġcuid bóṫa, ⁊ aġ ṛáġail ṛéiḋ le n-a ġcuid uṛċaṛ do ċaiṫeaṁ leiṛ an éan, ⁊ tá ré in ṛan taiṛnġiṛeaċt go raċaiḋ raiġeaḋ uaṫa ṛóṛ, tṛíd an bṛṛéaċán ṛin ó ċaoiḃ go caoiḃ de, ⁊ iṛ é an t-ainm a ḃéiḋeaṛ aṛ an raiġid ṛin, "aṛ dteanġa féin," ⁊ imṫeoċaiḋ an t-éan uainn ⁊ é aġ ṛeilt a ċuid ṛola go ṛiom, ⁊ aġ cuṛ na mílte ṛġṛeaḋ aṛ, ⁊ na mílte oċón. Aḋeiṛim leaṫ go ḃṛeicim an lá aġ teaċt, nuaiṛ ḃéiḋeaṛ ruaiġ aṛ an dá ṛġiaṫán duḃ ṛin, ⁊ tóġṛaiḋ na daoine atá leaṫ-ṁaṛḃ ⁊ leaṫ-ṁúċta, a ġcinn aṛíṛ, ⁊ móṛán aca do ċeiċ go tíoṛċaiḃ a ḃṛad ċaṛ ṛáile, le dul ó anál maṛḃṫaċ bṛéan an éin ṁóiṛ ṛin, filliṛiḋ ṛiad aṛíṛ, ⁊ cómnóċaiḋ ṛiad go ṛocaiṛ ṛárta ameaṛġ a ġcáiṛde ⁊ a nġaoiṫ. Agus tiucṛaiḋ árd-ṁeanma ⁊ meiṛneaċ móṛ aṛ aiṛ aṛíṛ ameaṛġ na ndaoine, ⁊ duiġṛiḋ aṛíṛ na daoine náṛ ċuiġ, ⁊ léiġṛiḋ

agus na daoine nar leig, 7 rgriobhaid na daoine nár rgríob, 7 déanaid gníomharta na daoine nach ndearnaid gníom riam, oibreóraid na daoine nár oibrig, plannóraid na daoine nár plannadaig, fárraid na daoine nár fár, meabhróraid na daoine nár mheabhraig, cuimneóraid na daoine do dearmad, 7 na daoine do bí ag gol béid riad ag fáilte, na daoine bí ar mí-céill béid riad lán-chíonna, na daoine bí na dtorc cuingid riad liúg arta. Searraid muinntir na tíre reó arír gan flaithra ar corp ná ar anam, com raor 7 bíodar agam, i láthair Dé 7 na ndaoine. Agus ní fada uainn an t-am rin. "Ir goiridh go bhfillfid an Fiann."

Tá athrugad ag teacht, 'ré an t-athrugad mór,
Agus ní béid brig i maoin ná i rtór,
Éireóraid an té bí beag go leór
Agus tuitfid anuar an té bí mór.

Tiucfaid an uair 'r ní bfad uainn í
Nach bfágfaid neart i reacht ná i ndlighe,
Agus cromfaid an muinéal nach raib crom,
An uair a dtiucfaid ré, tiucfaid ré trom.

An uair a dtiucfaid ré, tiucfaid ré trom,
Béid ré ramhar an té bí tom,
A'r béid ré tom an té bí ramhar,
Gan forgad d'á ceann gan ghleann gan cabair.

Árdóchar an t-iriall, adeir an bárd,
Íriseóchar arír an nid bí árd,
Athróchar an domhan ó bharr go bonn,
An uair a dtiucfaid ré, tiucfaid ré trom.

Má ċíð tú féin an níð fin teaċt,
'S an tír gan réan gan dlighe gan neaċt,
Sguabṫa le stoirm, gan fíor gan bríg,
Cuimhnigh orm 'r ná bíor do ċroide.

Tá an Saoghal so 'na ċrann
Bárr-glas, craob-ḃog, caint-mín, sleamhan,
Act tá péirtín ann go dlúṫ
N-uile lá ag diúil a fúg.

Act ó 'n trean-ċrann seargṫa fuar
Fárraid aníor plannda úr,
Geoḃaid an sean-ḃomhan bár gan truag,
Act fárraid an ḃomhan óg ar a uaig.

THE GREAT ENCHANTMENT

By Standish O'Grady

I have taken the following extracts from a series of articles which have appeared during this year in the *All Ireland Review*. It will be remembered that two years ago, on the report of the Childers' Commission that Ireland, through the breaking of a pledge made at the time of the Union, was being enormously overtaxed, all parties and all classes joined in public protest. Lieutenants and magistrates of counties called and spoke at meetings, and twenty-five county committees were formed to deal with the matter. Mr. O'Grady draws attention to the fact that of these twenty-five committees, not one has ever met. The "Enchantment" he attributes this paralysis to has not yet been broken or explained.—EDITOR.

In primitive literatures we read much about enchantment; in our own, instances that come readily to the mind are "The Stupefaction of the Ultonians"; and the enchantment of Finn and his Fianna in the weird palace of the Quicken Boughs. I always thought such tales to be mere exercises of imagination, but it is not so. Enchantment is a fact in nature. Through suggestion or self-suggestion a man may be flung into such a condition that his senses will cease to discharge their normal functions; in a stone he will see a flashing diamond, and in a flashing diamond a stone; in discord he will hear music, and in the sweetest music a jarring discord. Nations too, like individuals, may, as the punishment of their crimes and follies, find themselves flung into such an enchanted condition, and suffer that worst loss of all, the loss of reason.

The political understanding of Ireland to-day is under a spell, and its will paralysed. If proof be demanded for this startling assertion, how can proof to any good result be supplied? It is the same spell-bound understanding which will consider the proof. . . . Was or was not the political understanding of at least a great proportion of Ireland under a spell in the year 1853? In that year, while the country was still staggering under the combined effects of the great famine and of Free Trade, . . . the British statesmen imposed upon this country financial burdens which have resulted in the direct loss to Ireland of from 100 to 150 millions of pounds sterling, and the indirect loss of an amount which is incalculable. The agrarian agitations and their horrors, the flight of our people, the destruction of our aristocracy, the general impoverishment and degradation of our land, are perceived now clearly by all thinking men to be the consequences of that great betrayal of the national interests in 1853; and men can see that, and know it

for a truth, who are quite capable to-day of committing political crimes and follies as great as that of the "brass band" and of the hierarchy and priesthood and the poor deluded Irish multitudes who sustained them. For the enchantment only changes its mode of action—it does not cease to act. From generation to generation and from year to year, in the night time and in the day time, this horrible obsession knows no abatement of its power; it lies as heavy on the land to-day as in the decade that witnessed the great betrayal. Nay, it is more potent to-day, and exerts a mightier sway, as if dimly conscious of the coming of the hour of crisis—the hour when Ireland must either break the spell or sink for ever into the abyss prepared for all the nations who have forgotten the source of their life, who have loved lies and hated the truth, welcomed darkness and shrunk from the light. That fatal hour is drawing nigh. . . .

In 1898 the unknown dealer in his distribution of the cards filled our hands with winning cards, yet we could not table them, so great was the power of the spell. I perceive that our ancestors, from the date of the Battle of the Boyne up to about 1779, were under the control of a political enchantment somewhat similar. Under that control they assisted in the destruction of their own woollen trade and ocean-going commerce. Protestant Ireland starved or expatriated some 300,000 Protestant weavers, for the power of the spell was very heavy on the land. Patriotic historians attribute things like this to the wickedness and greed of a neighbouring people. It is not so; like the collapse of the Financial Reform movement, they spring from ourselves. We worship phantoms; and phantoms powerless *per se*, once worshipped—so they tell me—become endowed with a terrible and malignant vitality and activity. We

know that that is so with regard to idols, in themselves only sticks and stones. Did not our own ancestors slay their poor little children in honour of Crom, a shapeless hulk of stone? . . .

What I work against—for my fighting days, if I ever had any, are, I think, over—is this "Great Enchantment," whose modes of operation are past counting and whose subtlety transcends the human faculties to discern. . . .

Someone has written: "The passions must be held in reverence; they must not, they cannot, be excited at will." Now, though some are made differently in this respect, I confess I could not go into politics myself save passionately—that is to say, when excited and inflamed by some matter of transcendent importance and of evident practicability. Though always a steady voter and always forming an opinion, good or bad, about public questions as they arose, I never made but two incursions into politics in all my life. The first was in 1881–82, when I thought our land question might be settled to the satisfaction of the people and without involving the destruction of our landed gentry; the other was at the end of '96, when I thought that an universal movement was on foot for a change of the incidence of imperial taxation as it affects this country.

In 1853 Mr. Gladstone extended income-tax to Ireland for a period of seven years, in order to enable us to pay four million pounds worth of "Consolidated Annuities," a debt due, as alleged, by Ireland to the Treasury, and that Irish income-tax having been made perpetual, we have already paid that debt some eight times over. . . .

I never took an interest in this subject on account of the many millions which a successful prosecution of the controversy would have retained in Ireland or brought back into Ireland, but because it supplied a

grand common platform on which, for public purposes, all Ireland might unite.

On the first of these occasions we appointed a committee of five eminent members of the landlord class to look after our interests, which committee never sat and was never brought to an account for not sitting; and on the second, we appointed twenty-five county committees, not one of which ever sat. . . .

Aids and allies were hurrying to join us just at the moment that we elected to make fools of ourselves, when we broke rank and abandoned sure victory in order to chase hares, which was bad enough, and to resume the ancient Irish custom of destroying each other, which was a great deal worse. . . . Alas! I have seen the nobility and gentry and clergy and popular representatives of all the South and West, break their ranks of war and go a-hunting, though to all of them "the right" was very clear. . . . Silence is preferable to the things I would have to say about this "Lost Land" and its enchanted inhabitants; its aristocracy, with dull woe-begone eyes fixed on London! and its "United Irish" coming on for the final destruction of an Irish class and order; and all the pity and the folly and the shame and the ruin of the whole tragical business, in the midst of which I think that silence is better than speech. . . .

Surely we are a great people and deserve to get on! Now, these ludicrous breaks-down—or whatever we must call them—these incredible lapses and aberrations, exhibited by a people not only as intelligent and spirited as the average, but more intelligent than the average, at the time of their occurrence only filled me with amazement and consternation. I had not then traced to its source all that folly, nor quite realised how it was the inevitable outcome and resultant of a cause, operative, in different forms,

through all our tragical history; nor did I connect it with a national fault, perhaps a national crime, which has checked our progress from century to century, which has brought about the destruction of aristocracy after aristocracy, and which bids fair, as I write, to involve us all in one common ruin, and leave this land free for the exploitation of tourist touts, and commercial syndicates formed for the promotion of sport in waste countries. For if things continue to go on as they are going on to-day in Ireland, the bullock, which is now superseding the man, will be himself superseded by the wild beast and the wild bird, which the British and American sporting plutocracy will pleasantly shoot and pleasantly pursue, sustained by a little host of Irish uniformed gillies; which certainly would be rather a dismal ending for this ancient and famous nation. And yet things are moving that way steadily, sometimes, I think, inevitably.

The spell does not only affect the minds of our aristocracy. Its power is not so limited. It covers the whole land; every class and order of men in the island are held inescapably in the grip of that dead hand. With such a document in our possession as the Report of the Childers' Commission, with such a preponderating political power as is ours, and with such hosts of good British friends, why can we do nothing?—strengthless, purposeless, and resourceless, as were the Ultonians sunk under the curse of the great mother and queen whom they had outraged, drowned in the avenging tides of that fountain of their life which they had polluted. . . .

Heavy as lead, cold as death, the Great Enchantment obsesses the soul of the land, and not one but all classes lie supine under its sway—supine under the fanning of the gigantic wings. . . .

One thing only we desire, the luxury of lamenta-

tion. We prefer spoliation, degradation, extermination, and the British tourist as a half-way house to Hell; and this is the "Great Enchantment"! . . .

They (the aristocracy) might have been so much to this afflicted nation; half-ruined as they are, they might be so much to-morrow, but the curse that has fallen on the whole land, seems to have fallen on them with double power—the understanding paralysed, the will gone all to water, and for consequence a sure destruction. . . . During that six weeks' financial agitation, when they seemed to be giving the country a lead, . . . the war of classes stopped, stopped utterly. . . . The people thought they were about to lead them, and upon a matter upon which all Ireland was in virtual unanimity; a great question—great essentially, and involving gigantic issues. This marvellous opportunity, thrust into their hands by kind destiny, they flung away; and for what? For the Fry Commission! If it be asked what hope I now entertain regarding them, I would answer that I have none; but I do think that, here and there, I may be able to touch individual members of the class, and one man of the right kind, if awake and alive, might do much.

Aristocracies come and go like the waves of the sea; and some fall nobly and others ignobly. As I write, this Protestant Anglo-Irish aristocracy, which once owned all Ireland from the centre to the sea, is rotting from the land in the most dismal farce-tragedy of all time, without one brave deed, without one brave word.

Our last Irish aristocracy was catholic, intensely and fanatically Royalist and Cavalier, and compounded of elements which were Norman-Irish and Milesian-Irish. They worshipped the Crown when the Crown had become a phantom or a ghost, and the god whom they worshipped was not able to save

them or himself. They were defeated and exterminated. They lost everything, but they never lost honour; and because they did not lose that, their overthrow was bewailed in songs and music which will not cease to sound for centuries yet.

"Shawn O'Dwyer a Glanna,
We're worsted in the game."

Worsted they were, for they made a fatal mistake, and they had to go; but they brought their honour with them, and they founded noble or princely families on the Continent.

Who laments the destruction of our present Anglo-Irish aristocracy? Perhaps in broad Ireland not one. They fall from the land while innumerable eyes are dry, and their fall will not be bewailed in one piteous dirge, or one mournful melody.

THE LITERARY MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

By W. B. Yeats

Written in May 1899.—EDITOR.

I HAVE just come to a quiet Connaught house from seeing a little movement, in a great movement of thought which is fashioning the dreams of the next generation in Ireland, grow to a sudden maturity. Certain plays, which are an expression of the most characteristic ideals of what is sometimes called the "Celtic movement," have been acted in Dublin before audiences drawn from all classes and all political sections, and described at great length in every Nationalist newspaper. Whatever be the merit of these plays, and that must be left to the judgment of time, their success means, as I think, that the "Celtic movement," which has hitherto interested but a few cultivated people, is about to become a part of the thought of Ireland.

Before 1891, Unionists and Nationalists were too busy keeping one or two simple beliefs at their fullest intensity for any complexity of thought or emotion; and the national imagination uttered itself, with a somewhat broken energy, in a few stories and in many ballads about the need of unity against England, about the martyrs who had died at the hand of England, or about the greatness of Ireland before the coming of England. They built up Ireland's dream of Ireland, of an ideal country weighed down by immemorial sorrows and served by heroes and saints, and they taught generations of young men to love their country with a love that was the deepest emotion they were ever to know; but they built with the virtues and beauties and sorrows and hopes that would move to tears the greatest number of those eyes before whom the modern world is but beginning to unroll itself; and, except when some rare, personal impulse shaped the song according to its will, they built to the formal and conventional rhythm which would give the most immediate pleasure to ears that had forgotten Gaelic poetry and not learned the subtleties of English poetry. The writers who made

this literature or who shaped its ideals, in the years before the great famine, lived at the moment when the middle class had brought to perfection its ideal of the good citizen, and of a politics and a philosophy and a literature which would help him upon his way; and they made a literature full of the civic virtues and, in all but its unbounded patriotism, without inconvenient ardours. They took their style from Scott and Campbell and Macaulay, and that "universally popular" poetry which is really the poetry of the middle class, and from Beranger and that "peasant poetry" which looks for its models to the Burns of "Highland Mary" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night." Here and there a poet or a story-writer found an older dream among the common people or in his own mind, and made a personality for himself, and was forgotten; for it was the desire of everybody to be moved by the same emotions as everybody else, and certainly one cannot blame a desire which has thrown so great a shadow of self-sacrifice.

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The fall of Parnell and the wreck of his party and of the organisations that supported it were the symbols, if not the causes, of a sudden change. They were followed by movements and organisations that brought the ideas and the ideals which are the expression of personalities alike into politics, economics, and literature. Those who looked for the old energies, which were the utterance of the common will and hope, were unable to see that a new kind of Ireland, as full of energy as a boiling pot, was rising up amid the wreck of the old kind, and that the national life was finding a new utterance. This utterance was so necessary that it seems as if the hand that broke the ball of glass, that now lies in fragments full of a new iridescent life, obeyed some impulse from beyond its wild and capricious will.

More books about Irish subjects have been published in these last eight years than in the thirty years that went before them, and these books have the care for scholarship and the precision of speech which had been notoriously lacking in books on Irish subjects. An appeal to the will, a habit of thought which measures all beliefs by their intensity, is content with a strenuous rhetoric ; but an appeal to the intellect needs an always more perfect knowledge, an always more malleable speech. The new writers and the new organisations they work through—for organisations of various kinds take the place held by the critical press in other countries—have awakened Irish affections among many from whom the old rhetoric could never have got a hearing, but they have been decried for weakening the national faith by lovers of the old rhetoric. I have seen an obscure Irish member of Parliament rise at one of those monthly meetings of the Irish Literary Society, when the members of the society read sometimes their poems to one another, and ask their leave to read a poem. He did not belong to the society, but leave was given him, and he read a poem in the old manner, blaming the new critics and praising the old poems which had made him patriotic and filled his imagination with the images of the martyrs, and, as he numbered over their names, Wolfe Tone, Emmet, Owen Roe, Sarsfield, his voice shook, and many were angry with the new critics.

The organisations that are making this change are the Irish Literary Society in London, the National Literary Society in Dublin, which has founded, or rather sheltered with its influence, the Irish Literary Theatre, and the Feis Ceoil Committee in Dublin, at whose annual series of concerts of Irish music singers and pipers from all parts of Ireland compete ; and more important than all, the Gaelic League, which

has worked for the revival of the Gaelic language with such success that it has sold fifty thousand of its Gaelic text-books in a year. All these organisations have been founded since the fall of Parnell; and all are busy in preserving, or in moulding anew and without any thought of the politics of the hour, some utterance of the national life, and in opposing the vulgar books and vulgarer songs that come to us from England. We are preparing, as we hope, for a day when Ireland will speak in Gaelic, as much as Wales speaks in Welsh, within her borders, but speak, it may be, in English to other nations of those truths which were committed to her when "He set the borders of the nations according to His angels"; as Dionysius the Areopagite has written. Already, as I think, a new kind of romance, a new element in thought, is being moulded out of Irish life and traditions, and this element may have an importance for criticism, even should criticism forget the writers who are trying to embody it in their work, while looking each one through his own colour in the dome of many-coloured glass.

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Contemporary English literature takes delight in praising England and her Empire, the master-work and dream of the middle class; and, though it may escape from this delight, it must long continue to utter the ideals of the strong and wealthy. Irish intellect has always been preoccupied with the weak and with the poor, and now it has begun to collect and describe their music and stories, and to utter anew the beliefs and hopes which they alone remember. It may never make a literature preoccupied with the circumstance of their lives, like the "peasant poetry," whose half deliberate triviality, passionless virtue, and passionless vice has helped so many orderly lives; for a writer who wishes to write with his whole mind must knead the beliefs and hopes, which he has made his own,

with the circumstance of his own life. Burns had this preoccupation, and nobody will deny that he was a great poet; but even he had the poverty of emotions and ideas of a peasantry that had lost, like the middle class into which it would have its children absorbed, the imagination that is in tradition without finding the imagination that is in books. Irish literature may prolong its first inspiration without renouncing the complexity of ideas and emotions which is the inheritance of cultivated men, for it will have learned from the discoveries of modern learning that the common people, wherever civilization has not driven its plough too deep, keep a watch over the roots of all religion and all romance. Their poetry trembles upon the verge of incoherence with a passion all but unknown among modern poets, and their sense of beauty exhausts itself in countless legends and in metaphors that seem to mirror the energies of nature.

Dr. Hyde has collected many old Irish peasant love-songs, and, like all primitive poetry, they foreshadow a poetry whose intensity of emotion, or strangeness of language, has made it the poetry of little coteries. His peasant lover cries—

"It is happy for you, O blind man, who do not see much of women.
O! if you were to see what I see, you would be sick even as I am.
It is a pity, O God, that it was not blind I was before I saw her twisted hair.
I always thought the blind were pitiable, until my calamity grew beyond the grief of all,
Then though it is a pity I turned my pity into envy.
In a loop of the loops in a loop am I.
It is sorrow for whoever has seen her, and it is sorrow for him who does not see her every day.
It is sorrow for him who is tied in the knot of her love, and it is sorrow for him who is loosed out of it.
It is sorrow for him who is near her, and it is sorrow for him who is not near her."

Or he cries—

"O Maurya! you are my love, and the love of my heart is your love—
Love that is without littleness, without weakness,
Love from age till death,
Love growing out of folly,
Love that will send me close beneath the clay,
Love without a hope of the world,
Love without envy of fortune,
Love that has left me withered in captivity,
Love of my heart beyond women;
And a love such as that, it is seldom to be got from any man."

And Lady Gregory has translated a lament, that Raftery the wandering fiddler made for a fiddler some sixty years ago, into the simple English of the country people of to-day—

"The swans on the water are nine times blacker than a blackberry, since the man died from us that had pleasantness on the top of his fingers;

"His two grey eyes were like the dew of the morning that lies on the grass;

"And since he was laid in the grave, the cold is getting the upper hand.

"There are young women, and not without reason, sorry and heart-broken and withered, since he was left at the church;

"Their hair, thrown down and hanging, turned grey on their head.

"No flower in any garden, and the leaves of the trees have leave to cry, and they falling on the ground;

"There are no green flowers on the tops of the tufts since there did a boarded coffin go on Daly."

All are not like this, but the most inspired and, as I think, the most characteristic are like this. There is a square stone tower called Ballylee Castle, a couple of miles from where I am writing. A farmer called Hynes, who had a beautiful daughter, Mary Hynes, lived near it some sixty years ago; and all over the countryside old men and old women still

talk of her beauty, and the young and old praise her with a song made by Raftery—

"O star of light, and O sun in harvest,
O amber hair, O my share of the world;
There is no good to deny it or to try and hide it,
She is the sun in the heavens who wounded my heart.

There was no part of Ireland I did not travel,
From the rivers to the tops of the mountains,
To the edge of Lough Greine, whose mouth is hidden,
And I saw no beauty but was behind hers.

It is Mary Hynes, the calm and easy woman,
Has beauty in her mind and in her face;
If a hundred clerks were gathered together
They could not write down a half of her ways."

This song, though Gaelic poetry has fallen from its old greatness, has come out of the same dreams as the songs and legends, as vague, it may be, as the clouds of evening and of dawn, that became in Homer's mind the memory and the prophecy of all the sorrows that have beset and shall beset the journey of beauty in the world. A very old woman who remembers Mary Hynes said to me, and to a friend who was with me: "I never saw one so handsome as she was, and I never will until I die. There were people coming from all parts to look at her, and maybe some of them forgot to say, 'God bless her.'[1] Any way, she was young when she died, and my mother was at her funeral, and as to whether she was taken, well, there's others have been taken that were not handsome at all, and so it's likely enough she might have been, for there is no one to be seen at all that is handsome like she was." The spirit of Helen moves indeed among the legends that are told about turf-fires, and among the legends of the poor and

[1] They should have said, "God bless her," so that their admiration might not give the fairies power over her.

simple everywhere. A friend of mine was told a while ago, in a remote part of Donegal, of a young man who saw a light before him on the road, and found when he came near that it was from a lock of hair in an open box. The hair was so bright that, when he went into the stable where he slept, he put the box into a hole in the wall and had no need of a candle. After many wanderings he found her from whose head it had been taken, and after many adventures married her and reigned over a kingdom.

The peasant remembers such songs and legends, all the more, it may be, because he has thought of little but cows and sheep and the like in his own marriage, for his dream has never been entangled by reality. The beauty of women is mirrored in his mind, as the excitement of the world is mirrored in the minds of children, and like them he thinks nothing but the best worth remembering. The child William Blake said to somebody who had told him of a fine city, that he thought no city fine that had not walls of gold and silver. It may be that poetry is the utterance of desires that we can only satisfy in dreams, and that if all our dreams were satisfied there would be no more poetry. Dreams pass from us with childhood, because we are so often told they can never come true, and because we are taught with so much labour to admire the paler beauty of the world. The children of the poor and simple learn from their unbroken religious faith, and from their traditional beliefs, and from the hardness of their lives, that this world is nothing, and that a spiritual world, where all dreams come true, is everything; and therefore the poor and simple are that imperfection whose perfection is genius.

The most of us think that all things, when imagined in their perfection, that all images which emotion desires in its intensity, are among the things nobody

has ever seen or shall ever see; and so we are always reminding one another not to go too far from the moderation of reality. But the Irish peasant believes that the utmost he can dream was once or still is a reality by his own door. He will point to some mountain and tell you that some famous hero or beauty lived and sorrowed there, or he will tell you that Tir-nan-og, the country of the young, the old Celtic paradise,—the Land of the Living Heart, as it used to be called,—is all about him. An old woman close by Ballylee Castle said to a friend of mine the other day, when someone had finished a story of the poet Usheen's return from Tir-nan-og, where he had lived with his fairy mistress: "Tir-nan-og? That place is not far from us. One time I was in the chapel of Labane, and there was a tall thin man sitting next to me, and he dressed in grey; and after the mass I asked him where he came from. 'From Tir-nan-og,' he said. 'And where is that?' I asked him. 'It's not far from you,' he said. 'It's near the place where you live.' I remember well the look of him, and he telling me that. The priest was looking at us while we were talking together."

There are many grotesque things near at hand, the dead doing their penance in strange shapes, and evil spirits with terrible and ugly shapes, but people of a perfect beauty are never far off; and this beauty is often, I know not how often, that heroic beauty "which changes least from youth to age," and which has faded from modern painting and poetry before a fleeting voluptuous beauty. One old Mayo woman, who can neither read nor write, described it to me, though with grotesque comparisons. She has been long in service, and her language has not the simplicity of those who live among fields. She was standing in the window of her master's house looking out toward a mountain where Queen Maeve, the Queen of the

Western Spirits, is said to have been buried, when she saw "the finest woman she ever saw" travelling right across from the mountain and straight to her. The woman had a sword by her side and a dagger lifted up in her hand, and was dressed in white, with bare arms and feet. She looked "very strong and warry and fierce, but not wicked"; that is, not cruel, at all. The old woman had seen the Irish giant, and "though he was a fine man, he was nothing to this woman, for he was round, and could not have stepped out so soldierly." She told me that she was like a certain stately lady of the neighbourhood, "but she had no stomach on her, and was slight and broad in the shoulders, and was handsomer than anyone you ever saw now; she looked about thirty." The old woman covered her eyes with her hands, and when she uncovered them the apparition had vanished. The neighbours were "wild" with her for not waiting to see if there was a message, for they are sure it was Queen Maeve, who often shows herself to the pilots. I asked the old woman if she had seen others like Queen Maeve, and she said: "Some of them have their hair down, but they look quite different, like the sleepy-looking ladies you see in the papers. Those with their hair up are like this one. The others have long white dresses, but those with their hair up have short dresses, so that you can see their legs right up to the calf." After some careful questioning I found that they wore what appeared to be buskins. She went on: "They are fine and dashing-looking, like the men one sees riding their horses in twos and threes on the slopes of the mountains, with their swords swinging." She repeated over and over: "There is no such race living now, none so fine proportioned," or the like, and then said: "The present queen is a nice, pleasant-looking woman, but she is not like her. What makes me think so little of the ladies is that I

see none as they be," meaning the spirits; "when I think of her and of the ladies now, they are like little children running about, without being able to put their clothes on right. Is it the ladies? Why, I would not call them women at all!"

There are many old heroical tales about Queen Maeve, and before she was a queen she was a goddess and had her temples, and she is still the most beautiful of the beautiful. A young man among the Burren Hills of Clare told me, a couple of years ago, that he remembered an old poet who had made his poems in Irish, and had met in his youth one who had called herself Queen Maeve, and asked him if he would have money or pleasure. He said he would have pleasure, and she gave him her love for a time, and then went from him and ever after he was very sad. The young man had often heard him sing a lamentation he had made, but could only remember that it was "very mournful," and called her "Beauty of all Beauty." The song may have been but a resinging of a traditional theme, but the young man believed it.

Many, perhaps most, of those that I have talked with of these things have all their earthly senses, but those who have most knowledge of these things, so much indeed that they are permitted, it is thought, to speak but broken words, are those from whom the earthly senses have fallen away. "In every household" of the spirits even, there is "a queen and a fool, and, maybe, the fool is the wisest of all." This fool, who is held to wander in lonely places and to bewitch men out of the world,—for the touch of the queen and of the fool give death,—is the type of that old wisdom from which the good citizen and the new wisdom have led the world away, forgetting that "the ruins of time build mansions in eternity." The poetry that comes out of the old wisdom must turn always to religion and to the law of the hidden world, while

the poetry of the new wisdom must not forget politics and the law of the visible world; and between these poetries there cannot be any lasting peace. Those that follow the old wisdom must not shrink too greatly from the journey described in some verses Miss Hopper, a poet of our school, has put into the mouth of Dalua, the fairy fool—

> "The world wears on to sundown, and love is lost or won,
> But he recks not of loss or gain, the King of Ireland's son.
> He follows on for ever when all your chase is done,
> He follows after shadows, the King of Ireland's son."

Alone among nations, Ireland has in her written Gaelic literature, in her old love tales and battle tales, the forms in which the imagination of Europe uttered itself before Greece shaped a tumult of legend into her music of the arts; and she can discover, from the beliefs and emotions of her common people, the habit of mind that created the religion of the muses. The legends of other European countries are less numerous, and not so full of the energies from which the arts and our understanding of their sanctity arose, and the best of them have already been shaped into plays and poems. "The Celt," as it seems, created romance, when his stories of Arthur and of the Grail became for a time almost the only inspiration of European literature, and it would not be wonderful if he should remould romance after its oldest image, now that he is recovering his possessions.

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The movement of thought which has made the good citizen, or has been made by him, has surrounded us with comfort and safety, and with vulgarity and insincerity. One finds alike its energy and its weariness in churches which have substituted a system of morals for spiritual ardour; in pictures which have substituted conventionally pretty faces

for the disquieting revelations of sincerity; in poets who have set the praises of those things good citizens think praiseworthy above a dangerous delight in beauty for the sake of beauty. The Romantic movement, from the times of Blake and Shelley and Keats, when it took a new form, has been battling with the thoughts of the good citizen, as moss and ivy and grass battle with some old building, crumbling its dead stone and mortar into the living greenery of earth. The disorders of a Shelley or of a Heine in their art, and in their lives that mirror their art, are but a too impetuous ardour of battle, a too swift leaping of ivy or of grass to window ledge or gable end; and the intensity and strangeness of a picture by Rossetti or of an early picture by Watts are but a sudden falling of stones. Moss and ivy and grass gather against stone and mortar in unceasing enmity, for while the old is crumbling the new is building; and the Romantic movement will never have perfect victory unless, as mystics have thought, the golden age is to come again, and men's hearts and the weather to grow gentle as time fades into eternity. Blake said that all art was a labour to bring that golden age, and we call romantic art romantic because it has made that age's light dwell in the imaginations of a little company of studious persons.

Because the greater number of persons are too busy with the work of the world to forget the light of the sun, romantic art is, as I think, about to change its manner and become more like the art of the old poets, who saw the golden age and their own age side by side like substance and shadow. Ever since Christianity turned men's minds to Judea, and learning turned them to Greece and Rome, the sanctity has dwindled from their own hills and valleys, which the legends and beliefs of fifty centuries had filled so full of it that a man could hardly plough his fields or

follow his sheep upon the hillside without remembering some august story, or walking softly lest he had divine companions. When the valleys and the hills had almost become clay and stone, the good citizens plucked up their heart and took possession of the world and filled it with their little compact thoughts; and romance fled to more and more remote fairy-lands, and forgot that it was ever more than an old tale which nobody believes. But now we are growing interested in our own countries, and discovering that the common people in all countries that have not given themselves up to the improvements and devices of good citizens, which we call civilization, still half understand the sanctity of their hills and valleys; and at the same time a change of thought is making us half ready to believe with Ecclesiasticus, that "all things are made double one above another," and that the forms of nature may be temporal shadows of realities.

In a little time places may begin to seem the only hieroglyphs that cannot be forgotten, and poets to remember that they will come the nearer the old poets, who had a seat at every hearth, if they mingle their own dream with a story told for centuries of some mountain that casts its shadows upon many doors, and if they understand that the beauty they celebrate is a part of the paradise men's eyes shall look upon when they close upon the world. The paradise of the Christian, as those who think more of the order of communities than of the nature of things have shaped it, is but the fulfilment of one dream; but the paradise that the common people tell of about the fire, and still half understand, is the fulfilment of all dreams, and opens its gates as gladly to the perfect lover as to the perfect saint, and only he who understands it can lift romance into prophecy and make beauty holy. Their paradise, Tir-nan-og,

the Land of the Living Heart, the Grass Green Island of Apples, call it what you will, created that religion of the muses which gave the arts to the world; and those countries whose traditions are fullest of it, and of the sanctity of places, may yet remould romance till it has become a covenant between intellectual beauty and the beauty of the world. We cannot know how many these countries are until the new science of folklore and the almost new science of mythology have done their work; but Ireland, if she can awake again the but half-forgotten legends of Slieve Gullion, or of Cruachmagh, or of the hill where Maeve is buried, and make them an utterance of that desire to be at rest amid ideal perfection which is becoming conscious in the minds of poets as the good citizen wins the priests over to his side; or if she can make us believe that the beautiful things that move us to awe, white lilies among dim shadows, windy twilights over grey sands, dewy and silent places among hazel trees by still waters, are in truth, and not in phantasy alone, the symbols, or the dwellings, of immortal presences, she will have begun a change that, whether it is begun in our time or not for centuries, will some day make all lands holy lands again.

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Ireland has no great wealth, no preoccupation with successful persons to turn her writers' eyes to any lesser destiny. Even the poetry which had its form and much of its matter from alien thought dwelt, as the Gaelic ballads had done before it, on ideas living in the perfection of hope, on visions of unfulfilled desire, and not on the sordid compromise of success. The popular poetry of England celebrates her victories, but the popular poetry of Ireland remembers only defeats and defeated persons. A ballad that is in every little threepenny and sixpenny ballad book

asks if Ireland has no pride in her Lawrences and Wellingtons, and answers that these belong to the Empire and not to Ireland, whose "heart beats high" for men who died in exile or in prison; and this ballad is a type of all. The popular poetry, too, has made love of the earth of Ireland so much a part of her literature that it should not be a hard thing to fill it with the holiness of places. Politics are, indeed, the forge in which nations are made, and the smith has been so long busy making Ireland according to His will that she may well have some important destiny. But whether this is so or not, whether this destiny is to make her in the arts, as she is in politics, a voice of the idealism of the common people, who still remember the dawn of the world, or to give her an unforeseen history, it can but express the accidents and energies of her past, and criticism does its natural work in trying to prophesy this expression; and, even if it is mistaken, a prophecy is not always made all untrue by being unfulfilled. A few years will decide if the writers of Ireland are to shape themselves in our time for the fulfilment of this prophecy, for need and much discussion will bring a new national agreement, and the political tumult awake again.

A POSTSCRIPT

By W. B. Yeats

WHEN I have stood before some Irish crowd, speaking of something that seemed to me an immediate duty, if the popular hope, the life of all our hopes, as I think, was not to be weakened, I have said to myself, "how bewildered, how angry perhaps, everybody would be if any thoughtful person spoke out all his mind to any crowd." Though it may well be that no man can speak out all his mind, for the mind is half silence, and even the subtlest words lay their bonds on truth, a book like this helps men, who spend much of their lives in the midst of a movement of enthusiasm where one can but speak as if one wrote upon the dark with a burning stick, to tell what permanent quarrel, as of good and evil angels, has thrown upward what may seem a passing clamour, to the indifferent and the weary. And though I doubt not that all but all one's convictions go deeper than reason, I think that our Irish movements have always interested me in part because I see in them the quarrel of two traditions of life, one old and noble, one new and ignoble, one undying because it satisfies our conscience though it seem dying, and one about to die because it is hateful to our conscience though it seem triumphant throughout the world. In Ireland, where the Gaelic tongue is still spoken, and to some little extent where it is not, the people live according to a tradition of life that existed before commercialism, and the vulgarity founded upon it; and we who would keep the Gaelic tongue and Gaelic memories and Gaelic habits of mind would keep them, as I think, that we may some day spread a tradition of life that makes neither great wealth nor great poverty, that makes the arts a natural expression of life, that permits even common men to understand good art and high thinking, and to have the fine manners these things can give. Almost every one in Ireland, on the other hand, who comes from what are called the

educated and wealthy classes, that is to say, every man who has read a little Homer for the grammar and many vulgar books for his pleasure, or who thinks his stable of more importance than all libraries, seeks, and often with fervour, to establish a tradition of life, perfected and in part discovered by the English-speaking peoples, that has made great wealth and great poverty, that would make the arts impossible were it not for the self-sacrifice of a few who spend their lives in the bitterness of protest, that has made already the understanding of the arts and of high thinking impossible outside of a small cultivated class. They do this because they are entangled in the subtle net of bribery which England has spread among us by Courts, by Colleges, by Government offices, by a social routine, and they fold and unfold their net before us that they may make us like themselves, and we have answered by discovering an idea, by creating a movement of intellect, whose ever-growing abundance, whose ever-deepening energy, would show their education its sterility, their wealth its raggedness. There has been no notorious self-seeker these twenty years, no seller of causes for money down, but he has arisen amongst them; and there has been no man who has lived poorly that he may think well, no master of lofty speech, no imaginative mind, but he has arisen among us, and abundance in these things comes now as always from the hand of the Future, already half lifted in blessing.

Part of the power of this movement is that, unlike the purely political movement, it can use every talent and leave every talent in freedom. It has need of the violence of the mob that it may sometimes tear that subtle net, and it has need of every delicate talent, for it would discover, as I understand all such movements, the form of the nation made perfect, the fiery seed as upon the divine hand, in the ideas and

passions of the nation; and as all religions have built upon hope and desire and terror of death, changing them to sacraments that are like flames rustling up into one white point, it would build upon these ideas and passions an idea, a passion, as little to be reasoned over, as little to be doubted or analysed, as any simple love or hate, though it is that form of perfection, that fiery seed as in a mirror.

→ "... if failure were inevitable and even the fruit of achievement better etc." — "A Daughter of Raasay" p 266

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